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PUT YOURSELF IN HIS PLACE.

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BY

CHARLES READE,

AUTHOR OF "IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND," "HARD CASH," "FOUL PLAY,"
ETC. ETC.

"I will frame a work of fiction upon notorious fact, so that anybody shall think he can do the same; shall labour and toil attempting the same, and fail—such is the power of sequence and connection in writing."—HORACE: *Art of Poetry*.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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PUT YOURSELF IN HIS PLACE.

CHAPTER I.

GRACE snatched her hand from Henry, and raised herself with a vigour that contrasted with her late weakness. "Oh, it is Mr. Coventry. How wicked of me to forget him for a moment! Thank Heaven you are alive. Where have you been?"

"I fell into the mountain stream, and it rolled me down, nearly to here. I think I must have fainted on the bank. I found myself lying covered with snow; it was your beloved voice that recalled me to life."

Henry turned yellow, and rose to his feet.

Grace observed him, and replied, "Oh, Mr. Coventry, this is too high-flown. Let us both return thanks to the Almighty, who has preserved us, and, in the next place, to Mr. Little: we should both be dead but

for him." Then, before he could reply, she turned to Little, and said, beseechingly, "Mr. Coventry has been the companion of my danger."

"Oh, I'll do the best I can for him," said Henry, doggedly. "Draw nearer the fire, sir." He then put some coal on the forge, and blew up an amazing fire: he also gave the hand-bellows to Mr. Coventry, and set him to blow at the small grates in the mausoleum. He then produced a pair of woollen stockings. "Now, Miss Carden," said he, "just step into that pew, if you please, and make a dressing-room of it."

She demurred, faintly, but he insisted, and put her into the great pew, and shut her in.

"And now, please take off your shoes and stockings, and hand them over the pew to me."

"Oh, Mr. Little; you are giving yourself so much trouble."

"Nonsense. Do what you are bid." He said this a little roughly.

"I'll do whatever *you* bid me," said she, meekly: and instantly took off her dripping shoes, and stockings, and handed them over the pew. She received, in return, a nice warm pair of worsted stockings.

"Put on these directly," said he, "while I warm your shoes."

He dashed all the wet he could out of the shoes,

and, taking them to the forge, put hot cinders in: he shook the cinders up and down the shoes so quickly, they had not time to burn, but only to warm and dry them. He advised Coventry to do the same, and said he was sorry he had only one pair of stockings to lend. And that was a lie: for he was glad he had only one pair to lend. When he had quite dried the shoes, he turned round, and found Grace was peeping over the pew, and looking intolerably lovely in the fire-light. He kissed the shoes furtively, and gave them to her. She shook her head in a remonstrating way, but her eyes filled.

He turned away, and, rousing all his generous manhood, said, "Now you must both eat something, before you go." He produced a Yorkshire pie, and some bread, and a bottle of wine. He gave Mr. Coventry a saucepan, and set him to heat the wine; then turned up his sleeves to the shoulder, blew his bellows, and, with his pincers, took a lath of steel and placed it in the white embers. "I have only got one knife, and you won't like to eat with that. I must forge you one apiece."

Then Grace came out, and stood looking on, while he forged knives, like magic, before the eyes of his astonished guests. Her feet were now as warm as a toast, and her healthy young body could resist all the rest. She stood, with her back to the nearest pew, and

her hands against the pew too, and looked with amazement, and dreamy complacency, at the strange scene before her: a scene well worthy of Salvator Rosa: though, in fact, that painter never had the luck to hit on so variegated a subject.

Three broad bands of light shot from the fires, expanding in size, but weakening in intensity. These lights, and the candles at the west end, revealed in a strange combination the middle ages, the nineteenth century, and eternal nature.

Nature first. Snow gleaming on the windows. Oh, it was cosy to see it gleam, and sparkle, and to think "Aha! you all but killed me; now King Fire warms both thee and me." Snow-flakes, of enormous size, softly descending, and each appearing a diamond brooch, as it passed through the channels of fiery light.

The middle ages.—Massive old arches, chipped, and stained; a mouldering altarpiece, dog's-eared, (Henry had nailed it up again all but the top corner, and in it still faintly gleamed the Virgin's golden crown.) Pulpit, richly carved, but mouldering: gaunt walls, streaked and stained by time. At the west end, one saint—the last of many—lit by two candles, and glowing ruby red across the intervening gulf of blackness: on the nearest wall an inscription, that still told, in rusty letters, how Giles de la Beche had charged his lands with six merks

a year for ever, to buy bread and white watered herrings, the same to be brought into Cairnhope Church every Sunday in Lent, and given to two poor men and four women; and the same on Good Friday with a penny dole, and, on that day, the clerk to toll the bell at three of the clock after noon, and read the lamentation of a sinner, and receive one groat.

Ancient monuments, sculptures with here an arm gone, and here a head, that yet looked half alive in the weird and partial light.

And between one of those mediæval sculptures, and that mouldering picture of the Virgin, stood a living horse, munching his corn; and in the foreground was a portable forge, a mausoleum turned into fires and hot plate, and a young man, type of his century, forging table knives amidst the wrecks of another age.

When Grace had taken in the whole scene with wonder, her eye was absorbed by this one figure, a model of manly strength, and skill, and grace. How lightly he stepped: how easily his left arm blew the coals to a white heat, with blue flames rising from them. How deftly he drew out the white steel. With what tremendous force his first blows fell, and scattered hot steel around. Yet all that force was regulated to a hair—he beat, he moulded, he never broke. Then came the lighter blows; and not one left the steel as it found it. In less than a

minute the bar was a blade. It was work incredibly unlike his method in carving; yet, at a glance, Grace saw it was also perfection, but in an opposite style. In carving, the hand of a countess; in forging, a blacksmith's arm.

She gazed with secret wonder and admiration; and the comparison was to the disadvantage of Mr. Coventry; for he sat shivering, and the other seemed all power. And women adore power.

When Little had forged the knives and forks, and two deep saucers, with magical celerity, he plunged them into water a minute, and they hissed; he sawed off the rim of a pew, and fitted handles.

Then he washed his face and hands, and made himself dry and glowing; let down his sleeves, and served them some Yorkshire pie, and bread, and salt, and stirred a little sugar into the wine, and poured it into the saucers.

“Now eat a bit, both of you, before you go.”

Mr. Coventry responded at once to the invitation.

But Grace said timidly, “Yes, if you will eat with us.”

“No, no,” said he. “I've not been perished with snow, nor rolled in a river.”

Grace hesitated still; but Coventry attacked the pie directly. It was delicious. “By Jove, sir,” said he, “you are the prince of blacksmiths.”

“Blacksmiths!” said Grace, colouring high. But Little only smiled satirically.

Grace, who was really faint with hunger, now ate a little ; and then the host made her sip some wine.

The food and wine did Mr. Coventry so much good, that he began to recover his superiority, and expressed his obligations to Henry in a tone which was natural, and not meant to be offensive ; but yet it was so, under all the circumstances : there was an underlying tone of condescension. It made Grace fear he would offer Henry his purse at leaving.

Henry himself writhed under it ; but said nothing. Grace, however, saw his ire, his mortification, and his jealousy, in his face, and that irritated her ; but she did not choose to show either of the men how much it angered her.

She was in a most trying situation, and all the woman's wit and tact were keenly on their guard.

What she did was this : she did not utter one word of remonstrance, but she addressed most of her remarks to Mr. Little ; and, though the remarks were nothing in themselves, she contrived to throw profound respect into them. Indeed, she went beyond respect. She took the tone of an inferior addressing a superior.

This was nicely calculated to soothe Henry, and also to make Coventry, who was a man of tact, change his own manner.

Nor was it altogether without that effect. But

then it annoyed Coventry, and made him wish to end it.

After a while he said, "My dear Grace, it can't be far from Raby Hall. I think you had better let me take you home at once."

Grace coloured high, and bit her lip.

Henry was green with jealous anguish.

"Are you quite recovered, yourself?" said Grace, demurely, to Mr. Coventry.

"Quite; thanks to this good fellow's hospitality."

"Then *would* you mind going to Raby, and sending some people for me? I really feel hardly equal to fresh exertion just yet."

This proposal brought a flush of pleasure to Henry's cheek, and mortified Mr. Coventry cruelly in his turn.

"What, go and leave you here? Surely you cannot be serious."

"Oh, *I* don't wish you to leave me. Only you seemed in a hurry."

Henry was miserable again.

Coventry did not let well alone. He alluded delicately but tenderly to what had passed between them, and said he could not bear her out of his sight until she was safe at Raby. The words and the tone were those of a lover, and Henry was in agony: thereupon Grace laughed it off. "Not bear me out of your sight!" said

she. "Why, you ran away from me, and tumbled into the river. Ha! ha! ha! And" (very seriously) "we should both be in another world but for Mr. Little."

"You are very cruel," said Mr. Coventry. "When you gave up in despair, I ran for help. You punish me for failure; punish me savagely."

"Yes, I was ungenerous," said Grace. "Forgive me." But she said it rather coolly, and not with a very penitent air.

She added an explanation more calculated to please Henry than him. "Your gallantry is always graceful; and it is charming, in a drawing-room; but in this wild place, and just after escaping the grave, let us talk like sensible people. If you and I set out for Raby Hall alone, we shall lose our way again, and perish, to a certainty. But I think Mr. Little must know the way to Raby Hall."

"Oh, then," said Coventry, catching at her idea, "perhaps Mr. Little would add to the great obligation under which he has laid us both by going to Raby Hall and sending assistance hither."

"I can't do that," said Henry, roughly.

"And that is not at all what I was going to propose," said Grace, quietly. "But perhaps you would be so good as to go with us to Raby Hall? Then I should feel safe; and I want Mr. Raby to thank you,

for I feel how cold and unmeaning all I have said to you is ; I seem to have no words." Her voice faltered, and her sweet eyes filled.

"Miss Carden," said the young man, gravely, "I can't do that. Mr. Raby is no friend of mine, and he is a bigoted old man, who would turn me out of this place if he knew. Come, now, when you talk about gratitude to me for not letting you be starved to death, you make me blush. Is there a man in the world that wouldn't?—But this I do say ; it would be rather hard if you two were to go away, and cut my throat in return ; and, if you open your mouths ever so little, either of you, you *will* cut my throat. Why, ask yourselves, have I set up my workshop in such a place as this,—by choice ? It takes a stout heart to work here, I can tell you, and a stout heart to sleep here over dead bones."

"I see it all. The Trades Unions !"

"That is it. So, now, there are only two ways. You must promise me never to breathe a word to any living soul, or I must give up my livelihood, and leave the country."

"What, cannot you trust me ? Oh, Mr. Little !"

"No, no ; it's this gentleman. He is a stranger to me, you know ; and, you see, my life may be at stake, as well as my means."

“Mr. Coventry is a gentleman, and a man of honour. He is incapable of betraying you.”

“I should hope so,” said Coventry. “I pledge you the word of a gentleman I will never let any human creature know that you are working here.”

“Give me your hand on that, if you please.”

Coventry gave him his hand with warmth and evident sincerity.

Young Little was reassured. “Come,” said he, “I feel I can trust you both. And, sir, Miss Carden will tell you what happened to me in Cheetham’s works; and then you will understand what I risk upon your honour.”

“I accept the responsibility; and I thank you for giving me this opportunity to show you how deeply I feel indebted to you.”

“That is square enough. Well, now my mind is at ease about that, I’ll tell you what I’ll do; I won’t take you quite to Raby Hall; but I’ll take you so near to it you can’t miss it: and then I’ll go back to my work.”

He sighed deeply at the lonely prospect, and Grace heard him.

“Come,” said he, almost violently, and led the way out of the church. But he stayed behind to lock the door, and then joined them.

They all three went together, Grace in the middle.

There was now but little snow falling, and the air was not so thick; but it was most laborious walking, and soon Mr. Coventry, who was stiff and in pain, fell a little behind, and groaned as he hobbled on.

Grace whispered to Henry: "Be generous. He has hurt himself so."

This made Henry groan in return. But he said nothing. He just turned back to Coventry,—“You can't get on without help, sir; lean on me.”

The act was friendly, the tone surly. Coventry accepted the act, and noted the tone in his memory.

When Grace had done this, she saw Henry misunderstood it, and she was sorry, and waited an opportunity to restore the balance: but, ere one came, a bell was heard in the air; the great alarm-bell of Raby Hall.

Then faint voices were heard of people calling to each other here and there in the distance.

“What is it?” asked Grace.

Henry replied,—“What should it be? The whole country is out after you. Mr. Raby has sense enough for that.”

“Oh, I hope they will not see the light in the church, and find you out.”

“You are very good to think of that. Ah! there's a bonfire: and here comes a torch. I must go and

quench my fires. Good-by, Miss Carden. Good evening, sir."

With this, he retired; but, as he went, he sighed.

Grace said to Coventry,—“Oh, I forgot to ask him a question:” and ran after him. “Mr. Little!”

He heard and came back to her.

She was violently agitated. “I can’t leave you so,” she said. “Give me your hand.”

He gave it her.

“I mortified you; and you have saved me.” She took his hand, and, holding it gently in both her little palms, sobbed out,—“Oh, think of something I can do, to show my gratitude, my esteem. Pray, pray, pray.”

“Wait two years for me.”

“Oh, not that. I don’t mean that.”

“That or nothing. In two years I’ll be as good a gentleman as *he* is. I’m not risking my life in that church for nothing. If you have one grain of pity or esteem for me, wait two years.”

“Incurable!” she murmured: but he was gone.

Coventry heard the prayer. That was loud and earnest enough. Her reply he could not hear.

She rejoined him, and the torch came rapidly forward.

It was carried by a lass, with her gown pinned nearly to her knees, and displaying powerful and grand

limbs : she was crying, like the tenderest woman, and striding through the snow, like a young giant.

When the snow first came down, Mr. Raby merely ordered large fires to be lighted and fed in his guests' bed-rooms ; he feared nothing worse for them than a good wetting.

When dinner-time came, without them, he began to be anxious, and sent a servant to the little public-house, to inquire if they were there.

The servant had to walk through the snow, and had been gone about an hour, and Mr. Raby was walking nervously up and down the hall, when Jael Dence burst in at the front door, as white as a sheet, and gasped out in his face : " THE GABRIEL HOUNDS ! ! "

Raby ran out directly, and sure enough, that strange pack were passing in full cry over the very house. It was appalling. He was dumb with awe for a moment. Then he darted into the kitchen and ordered them to ring the great alarm-bell incessantly : then into the yard, and sent messengers to the village, and to all his tenants, and in about an hour there were fifty torches, and as many sheep-bells, directed upon Cairnhope hill ; and, as men and boys came in from every quarter, to know why Raby's great alarm-bell was ringing, they were armed with torches, and sent up Cairnhope.

At last the servant returned from "The Colley Dog," with the alarming tidings that Miss Carden and Mr. Coventry had gone up the hill, and never returned. This, however, was hardly news. The Gabriel hounds always ran before calamity.

At about eleven o'clock, there being still no news of them, Jael Dence came to Mr. Raby wringing her hands. "Why do all the men go east for them?"

"Because they are on the east side."

"How can ye tell that? They have lost their way."

"I am afraid so," groaned Raby.

"Then why do you send all the men as if they hadn't lost their way? East side of Cairnhope! why that is where they ought to be, but it is not where they are, man."

"You are a good girl, and I'm a fool," cried Raby. "Whoever comes in after this, I'll send them up by the old church."

"Give me a torch, and I'll run myself."

"Ay, do, and I'll put on my boots, and after you."

Then Jael got a torch, and kilted her gown to her knees, and went striding through the snow with desperate vigour, crying as she went, for her fear was great and her hope was small, from the moment she heard the Gabriel hounds.

Owing to the torch, Grace saw her first, and uttered a little scream : a loud scream of rapture replied : the torch went anywhere, and gentle and simple were locked in each other's arms, Jael sobbing for very joy after terror, and Grace for sympathy, and also because she wanted to cry, on more accounts than one.

Another torch came on, and Jael cried triumphantly, "This way, Squire! She is here!" and kissed her violently again.

Mr. Raby came up, and took her in his arms, without a word, being broken with emotion : and, after he had shaken Coventry by both hands, they all turned homewards, and went so fast that Coventry gave in with a groan.

Then Grace told Jael what had befallen him, and just then another torch came in, held by George the blacksmith, who, at sight of the party, uttered a stentorian cheer, and danced upon the snow.

"Behave, now," said Jael, "and here's the gentleman sore hurt in the river; Geordie, come and make a chair with me."

George obeyed, and put out his hands, with the fingers upwards; Jael did the same, with the fingers downwards : they took hands, and, putting their stalwart arms under Coventry, told him to fling an arm round each of their necks : he did so, and up he went; he

was no more than a feather to this pair, the strongest man and woman in Cairnhope.

As they went along, he told them his adventure in the stream, and, when they heard it, they ejaculated to each other, and condoled with him kindly, and assured him he was alive by a miracle.

They reached Raby, and, in the great hall, the Squire collected his people and gave his orders. "Stop the bell. Broach a barrel of ale, and keep open house, so long as malt, and bacon, and cheese last. Turn neither body nor beast from my door this night, or may God shut His gate in your faces. Here are two guineas, George, to ring the church bells, you and your fellows; but sup here first. Cans of hot water upstairs, for *us*. Lay supper, instead of dinner; brew a bowl of punch. Light all the Yule candles, as if it was Christmas eve. But first down on your knees, all of ye, whilst I thank God, who has baffled those Gabriel Hell-hounds for once, and saved a good man and a bonny lass from a dog's death."

They all went down on their knees, on the marble floor, directly, and the Squire uttered a few words of hearty thanksgiving, and there was scarcely a dry eye.

Then the guests went upstairs, and had their hot baths, and changed their clothes, and came down to supper in the blazing room.

Whilst they were at supper, the old servant, who waited on them, said something in a low voice to his master. He replied that he would speak to the man in the hall.

As soon as he was gone, Miss Carden said in French, "Did you hear that?"

"No."

"Well, I did. Now, mind your promise. We shall have to fib. You had better say nothing. Let me speak for you; ladies fib so much better than gentlemen."

Mr. Raby came back, and Grace waited to see if he would tell her. I don't think he intended to, at first; but he observed her eyes inquiring, and said, "One of the men, who was out after you to-night, has brought in word there is a light in Cairnhope old church."

"Do you believe it?"

"No. But it is a curious thing; a fortnight ago (I think I told you) a shepherd brought me the same story. He had seen the church on fire; at least he said so. But mark the paralysing effect of superstition. My present informant no sooner saw this light—probably a reflection from one of the distant torches—than he coolly gave up searching for you. 'They are dead,' says he, 'and the spirits in the old church are

saying mass for their souls. I'll go to supper.' So he came here to drink my ale, and tell his cock-and-bull story."

Grace put in her word with a sweet, candid face. "Sir, if there had been a light in that church, should we not have seen it?"

"Why, of course you would: you must have been within a hundred yards of it in your wanderings. I never thought of that."

Grace breathed again.

"However, we shall soon know. I have sent George and another man right up to the church to look. It is quite clear now."

Grace felt very anxious, but she forced on a careless air. "And suppose, after all, there should be a light?"

"Then George has his orders to come back and tell me; if there *is* a light, it is no ghost nor spirit, but some smuggler, or poacher, or vagrant, who is desecrating that sacred place; and I shall turn out with fifty men, and surround the church, and capture the scoundrel, and make an example of him."

Grace turned cold, and looked at Mr. Coventry. She surprised a twinkle of satisfaction in his eye. She never forgot it.

She sat on thorns, and was so distraite she could hardly answer the simplest question.

At last, after an hour of cruel suspense, the servant came in, and said, "George is come back, sir."

"Oh, please let him come in here, and tell us."

"By all means. Send him in."

George appeared, the next moment, in the doorway. "Well?" said Mr. Raby.

"Well?" said Grace, pale, but self-possessed.

"Well," said George, sulkily, "it is all a lie. Th' old church is as black as my hat."

"I thought as much," said Mr. Raby. "There, go and get your supper."

Soon after this Grace went up to bed, and Jael came to her, and they talked by the fire while she was curling her hair. She was in high spirits, and Jael eyed her with wonder and curiosity.

"But, Miss," said Jael, "the magpie was right. Oh, the foul bird! That's the only bird that wouldn't go into the ark with Noah and his folk."

"Indeed! I was not aware of the circumstance."

"'Twas so, Miss; and I know the reason. A very old woman told me."

"She must have been very old indeed, to be an authority on that subject. Well, what was the reason?"

"She liked better to perch on the roof of th' ark, and jabber over the drowning world; that was why. So, ever after that, when a magpie flies across, turn back, or look to meet ill-luck."

“That is to say the worst creatures are stronger than their Creator, and can bring us bad luck against His will. And you call yourself a Christian? Why this is Paganism. They were frightened at ravens, and you at magpies. A fig for your magpies! and another for your Gabriel hounds! God is high above them all.”

“Ay, sure; but these are signs of His will. Trouble and all comes from God. And so, whenever you see a magpie, or hear those terrible hounds——”

“Then tremble! for it is all to end in a bowl of punch, and a roaring fire; and Mr. Raby, that passes for a Tartar, being so kind to me; and me being in better spirits than I have been for ever so long.”

“Oh, Miss!”

“And oh, Miss, to you. Why, what is the matter? I have been in danger! Very well; am I the first? I have had an adventure! All the better. Besides, it has shown me what good hearts there are in the world, yours amongst the rest.” (Kissing her.) “Now, don’t interrupt, but listen to the words of the wise and their dark sayings. Excitement is a blessing. Young ladies need it more than anybody. Half the foolish things we do, it is because the old people are so stupid and don’t provide us enough innocent excitement. Dancing till five is a good thing now and then; only

that is too bodily, and ends in a headache, and feeling stupider than before. But to-night, what glorious excitement! Too late for dinner—drenched with snow—lost on a mountain—anxiety—fear—the Gabriel hounds—terror—despair—resignation—sudden relief—warm stockings—delightful sympathy—petted on every side—hungry—happy—fires—punch! I never lived till to-night—I never relished life till now. How could I? I never saw Death nor Danger near enough to be worth a straw.”

Jael made no attempt to arrest this flow of spirits. She waited quietly for a single pause, and then she laid her hand on the young lady's, and, fastening her eyes on her, she said, quietly,—

“You have seen *him*.”

Grace Carden's face was scarlet in a moment, and she looked, with a rueful imploring glance, into those great grey searching eyes of Jael Dence.

Her fine silvery tones of eloquence went off into a little piteous whine. “You are very cunning—to believe in a magpie.” And she hid her blushing face in her hands. She took an early opportunity of sending this too sagacious rustic to bed.

Next day Mr. Coventry was so stiff and sore he did not come down to breakfast. But Grace Carden, though

very sleepy, made her appearance, and had a most affectionate conversation with Mr. Raby. She asked leave to christen him again. "I must call you something, you know, after all this. Mr. Raby is cold. Godpapa is childish. What do you say to—'Uncle?'"

He said he should be delighted. Then she dipped her forefinger in water. He drew back with horror.

"Come, young lady," said he, "I know it is an age of burlesque. But let us spare the sacraments, and the altar, and such trifles."

"I'm not half so wicked as you think," said Grace. Then she wrote "uncle" on his brow, and so settled that matter.

Mr. Coventry came down about noon, and resumed his courtship. He was very tender, spoke of the perils they had endured together as an additional tie, and pressed his suit with ardour.

But he found a great change in the lady.

Yesterday, on Cairnhope Peak, she was passive, but soft and complying. To-day she was polite, but cool, and as slippery as an eel. There was no pinning her.

And, at last, she said, "The fact is, I'm thinking of our great preservation, and more inclined to pray than flirt, for once."

"And so am I," said the man of tact; "but what I offer is a sacred and life-long affection."

“ Oh, of course.”

“ A few hours ago you did me the honour to listen to me. You even hinted I might speak to your father.”

“ No, no. I only asked if you *had* spoken to him.”

“ I will not contradict you. I will trust to your own candour. Dear Grace, tell me, have I been so unfortunate as to offend you since then ?”

“ No.”

“ Have I lost your respect ?”

“ Oh, no.”

“ Have I forfeited your good opinion ?”

“ Dear me, no.” (A little pettishly.)

“ Then how is it that I love you better, if possible, than yesterday ; and you seem not to like me so well as yesterday ?”

“ One is not always in the same humour.”

“ Then you don't like me to-day ?”

“ Oh yes, but I do. And I shall always like you : if you don't tease me, and urge me too much. It is hardly fair to hurry me so ; I am only a girl, and girls make such mistakes sometimes.”

“ That is true ; they marry on too short an acquaintance. But you have known me more than two years, and in all that time have I once given you reason to think that you had a rival in my admiration, my love ?”

“I never watched you to see. But all that time you have certainly honoured me with your attention, and I do believe you love me more than I deserve. Please do not be angry : do not be mortified. There is no occasion ; I am resolved not to marry until I am of age ; that is all : and where’s the harm of that ?”

“I will wait your pleasure ; all I ask you, at present, is to relieve me of my fears, by engaging yourself to me.”

“Ah ; but I have always been warned against long engagements.”

“Long engagements ! Why, how old are you, may I ask ?”

“Only nineteen. Give me a little time to think.”

“If I wait till you are of age, *that will be two years.*”

“Just about. I was nineteen on the 12th of December. What is the matter ?”

“Oh, nothing. A sudden twinge. A man does not get rolled over sharp rocks, by a mountain torrent, for nothing.”

“No, indeed.”

“Never mind that, if I’m not to be punished in my heart as well. This resolution, not to marry for two years, is it your own idea ? or has somebody put it into your head since we stood on Cairnhope, and looked at Bollinghope ?”

“Please give me credit for it,” said Grace, turning very red: “it is the only sensible one I have had for a long time.”

Mr. Coventry groaned aloud, and turned very pale.

Grace said she wanted to go upstairs for her work, and so got away from him.

She turned at the door, and saw him sink into a chair, with an agony in his face that was quite new to him.

She fled to her own room, to think it all over, and she entered it so rapidly that she caught Jael crying, and rocking herself before the fire.

The moment she came in Jael got up, and affected to be very busy, arranging things; but always kept her back turned to Grace.

The young lady sat down, and leaned her cheek on her hand, and reflected very sadly and seriously on the misery she had left in the drawing-room, and the tears she had found here.

Accustomed to make others bright and happy by her bare presence, this beautiful and unselfish young creature was shocked at the misery she was sowing around her, and all for something her judgment told her would prove a chimera. And again she asked herself was she brave enough, and selfish enough, to defy her father and her godfather, whose mind was written so clearly in that terrible inscription.

She sat there, cold at heart, a long time, and at last came to a desperate resolution.

“Give me my writing-desk.”

Jael brought it her.

“Sit down there where I can see you; and don’t hide your tears from me. I want to see you cry. I want every help. I wasn’t born to make everybody miserable: I am going to end it.”

She wrote a little, and then she stopped, and sighed; then she wrote a little more, and stopped, and sighed. Then she burned the letter, and began again; and as she wrote, she sighed; and as she wrote on, she moaned.

And, as she wrote on, the tears began to fall upon the paper.

It was piteous to see the struggle of this lovely girl, and the patient fortitude that could sigh, and moan, and weep, yet go on doing the brave act that made her sigh, and moan, and weep.

At last, the letter was finished, and directed; and Grace put it in her bosom, and dismissed Jael abruptly, almost harshly, and sat down, cold and miserable, before the fire.

At dinner-time, her eyes were so red she would not appear. She pleaded headache, and dined in her own room.

Meantime Mr. Coventry passed a bitter time.

He had heard young Little say, "Wait two years." And now Grace was evading and procrastinating, and so, literally, obeying that young man, with all manner of false pretences. This was a revelation, and cast back a bright light on many suspicious things he had observed in the church.

He was tortured with jealous agony. And it added to his misery that he could not see his way to any hostilities.

Little could easily be driven out of the country, for that matter : he had himself told them both how certainly that would befall him if he was betrayed to the Unions. But honour and gratitude forbade this line ; and Coventry, in the midst of his jealous agony, resisted that temptation fiercely, would not allow his mind even to dwell upon it for a moment.

He recalled all his experiences ; and, after a sore struggle of passion, he came to some such conclusion as this : That Grace would have married him if she had not unexpectedly fallen in with Little, under very peculiar and moving circumstances : that an accident of this kind would never occur again, and he must patiently wear out the effect of it.

He had observed that in playing an uphill game of love the lover must constantly ask himself, "What should I do, were I to listen to my heart?" and having

ascertained that, must do the opposite. So now Mr. Coventry grimly resolved to control his wishes for a time, to hide his jealousy, to hide his knowledge of her deceit, to hide his own anger. He would wait some months before he again asked her to marry him, unless he saw a change in her; and, meantime, he would lay himself out to please her, trusting to this, that there could be no intercourse by letter between her and a workman, and they were not likely to meet again in a hurry.

It required considerable fortitude to curb his love and jealousy, and settle on this course. But he did conquer after a hard struggle, and prepared to meet Miss Carden at dinner with artificial gaiety.

But she did not appear; and that set Mr. Coventry thinking again. Why should she have a headache? He had a rooted disbelief in women's headaches. His own head had far more reason to ache, and his heart too. He puzzled himself all dinner-time about this headache, and was very bad company.

Soon after dinner he took a leaf out of her book, pretended headache, and said he should like to take a turn by himself in the air.

What he really wanted to do was to watch Miss Carden's windows, for he had all manner of ugly suspicions.

There seemed to be a strong light in the room. He could see no more.

He walked moodily up and down, very little satisfied with himself, and at last he got ashamed of his own thoughts.

“Oh, no!” he said, “she is in her room sure enough.”

He turned his back, and strolled out into the road.

Presently he heard the rustle of a woman's dress. He stepped into the shade of the firs directly, and his heart began to beat hard.

But it was only Jael Dence. She came out within a few yards of him. She had something white in her hand, which, however, she instinctively conveyed into her bosom the moment she found herself in the moonlight. Coventry saw her do it, though.

She turned to the left, and walked swiftly up the road.

Now Coventry knew nothing about this girl, except that she belonged to a class with whom money generally goes a long way. And he now asked himself whether it might not be well worth his while to enlist her sympathies on his side.

While he was coming to this conclusion, Jael, who was gliding along at a great pace, reached a turn in the road, and Mr. Coventry had to run after her to catch her.

When he got to the turn in the road, she was just going round another turn, having quickened her pace.

Coventry followed more leisurely. She might be going to meet her sweetheart; and, if so, he had better talk to her on her return.

He walked on till he saw at some distance a building, with light shining through it in a peculiar way: and now the path became very rugged and difficult. He came to a standstill, and eyed the place where his rival was working at that moment. He eyed it with a strange mixture of feelings. It had saved his life and hers, after all. He fell into another mood, and began to laugh at himself for allowing himself to be disturbed by such a rival.

But what is this? Jael Dence comes in sight again: she is making for the old church.

Coventry watched her unseen. She went to the porch, and, after she had been there some time, the door was opened just a little, then wide, and she entered the building. He saw it all in a moment: the girl was already bought by the other side, and had carried his rival a letter before his eyes.

A clandestine correspondence!

All his plans and his resolutions melted away before this discovery. There was nothing to be done but to

save the poor girl from this miserable and degrading attachment, and its inevitable consequences.

He went home, pale with fury, and never once closed his eyes all night.

Next day he ordered his dog-cart early; and told Mr. Raby and Grace he was going to Hillsborough for medical advice: had a pain in his back he could not get rid of.

He called on the chief constable of Hillsborough, and asked him, confidentially, if he knew anything about a workman called Little.

“What; a Londoner, sir? the young man that is at odds with the Trades?”

“I shouldn’t wonder. Yes; I think he is. A friend of mine takes an interest in him.”

“And so do I. His case was a disgrace to the country, and to the constabulary of the place. It occurred just ten days before I came here, and it seems to me that nothing was done which ought to have been done.”

Mr. Coventry put in a question or two, which elicited from Mr. Ransome all he knew about the matter.

“Where does this Little live?” was the next inquiry.

“I don’t know; but I think you could learn at Mr. Cheetham’s. The only time I ever saw Little,

he was walking with the foreman of those works. He was pointed out to me. A dark young man; carries himself remarkably well—doesn't look like a workman. If they don't know at Cheetham's, I'll find him out for you in twenty-four hours."

"But this Grotait. Do you know him?"

"Oh, he is a public character. Keeps 'The Cutler's Arms,' in Black Street."

"I understand he repudiates all these outrages."

"He does. But the workmen themselves are behind the scenes; and what do they call him? Why, 'Old Smitem.'"

"Ah! You are one of those who look below the surface," said the courtier.

He then turned the conversation, and, soon after, went away. He had been adroit enough to put his questions in the languid way of a man who had no personal curiosity, and was merely discharging a commission.

Mr. Ransome, as a matter of form, took a short note of the conversation; but attached no importance to it. However, he used the means at his command to find out Little's abode. Not that Mr. Coventry had positively asked him to do it; but, his attention being thus unexpectedly called to the subject, he felt desirous to talk to Little on his own account.

Mr. Coventry went straight to "The Cutler's Arms," but he went slowly. A powerful contest was now going on within him; jealousy and rage urged him onward, honour and gratitude held him back. Then came his self-deceiving heart, and suggested that Miss Carden had been the first to break her promise (she had let Jael Dence into Little's secret), and that he himself was being undermined by cunning and deceit; strict notions of honour would be out of place in such a combat. Lastly, he felt it his *duty* to save Miss Carden from a degrading connection.

All these considerations, taken together, proved too strong for his good faith; and so stifled the voice of conscience, that it could only keep whispering against the deed, but not prevent it.

He went direct to "The Cutler's Arms." He walked into the parlour and ordered a glass of brandy-and-water, and asked if he could see Mr. Grotait, privately. Mr. Grotait came in.

"Sit down, Mr. Grotait. Will you have anything?"

"A glass of ale, sir, if you please."

When this had been brought, and left, and the parties were alone, Coventry asked him whether he could receive a communication under a strict promise of secrecy.

“If it is a trade matter, sir, you can trust me. A good many have.”

“Well then, I can tell you something about a workman called Little. But before I say a word, I must make two express conditions. One is, that no violence shall be used towards him: the other, that you never reveal to any human creature it was I who told you.”

“What, is he working still?”

“My conditions, Mr. Grotait?”

“I promise you absolute secrecy, sir, as far as you are concerned. As to your other condition, the matter will work thus: if your communication should be as important as you think, I can do nothing—the man is not in the saw-trade—I shall carry the information to two other secretaries, and shall not tell them I had it from Mr. Coventry, of Bollinghope.” (Mr. Coventry started at finding himself known.) “Those gentlemen will be sure to advise with me, and I shall suggest to them to take effectual measures, but to keep it, if possible, from the knowledge of all those persons, who discredit us by their violent acts.”

“Well then, on that understanding—the man works all night in a deserted church at Cairnhope: it is all up among the hills.”

Grotait turned red. “Are you sure of this?”

“Quite sure.”

“ You have seen him ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Has he a forge ? ”

“ Yes ; and bellows, and quantities of moulds, and strips of steel. He is working on a large scale.”

“ It shall be looked into, sir, by the proper persons. Indeed the sooner they are informed the better.”

“ Yes, but mind, no violence. You are strong enough to drive him out of the country without that.”

“ I should hope so.”

Coventry then rose, and left the place ; but he had no sooner got into the street, than a sort of horror fell on him ; horror of himself, distrust and dread of the consequences, to his rival but benefactor.

Almost at the door, he was met by Mr. Ransome, who stopped him and gave him Little’s address ; he had obtained it without difficulty from Bayne.

“ I am glad you reminded me, sir,” said he ; “ I shall call on him myself, one of these days.”

These words rang in Coventry’s ears, and put him in a cold perspiration. “ Fool ! ” thought he, “ to go and ask a public officer, a man who hears everybody in turn.”

What he had done disinclined him to return to Cairnhope. He made a call or two first, and loitered about, and then at last back to Raby, gnawed with misgivings and incipient remorse.

Mr. Grotait sent immediately for Mr. Parkin, Mr. Jobson, and Mr. Potter, and told them the secret information he had just received.

They could hardly believe it at first; Jobson, especially, was incredulous. He said he had kept his eye on Little, and assured them the man had gone into wood-carving, and was to be seen in the town all day.

“Ay,” said Parkin, “but this is at night; and, now I think of it, I met him t’other day, about dusk, galloping east, as hard as he could go.”

“My information is from a sure source,” said Grotait, stiffly.

Parkin.—“What is to be done?”

Jobson.—“Is he worth another strike?”

Potter.—“The time is unfavourable: here’s a slap of dull trade.”

The three then put their heads together, and various plans were suggested and discussed, and, as the parties were not now before the public, that horror of gun-powder, vitriol, and life-preservers, which figured in their notices and resolutions, did not appear in their conversation. Grotait alone was silent and doubtful. This Grotait was the greatest fanatic of the four, and, like all fanatics, capable of vast cruelty: but his cruelty lay in his head, rather than in his heart. Out of Trade questions, the man, though vain and arrogant, was of a

genial and rather a kindly nature ; and, even in Trade questions, being more intelligent than his fellows, he was sometimes invested with a gleam of humanity.

His bigotry was, at this moment, disturbed by a visitation of that kind. "I'm perplexed," said he : "I don't often hesitate on a Trade question neither. But the men we have done were always low-lived blackguards, who would have destroyed us if we had not disabled them. Now this Little is a decent young chap. He struck at the root of our Trades, so long as he wrought openly. But on the sly, and nobody knowing but ourselves, mightn't it be as well to shut our eyes a bit? My informant is not in trade."

The other three took a more personal view of the matter. Little was outwitting, and resisting them. They saw nothing for it but to stop him, by hook or by crook.

While they sat debating his case in whispers, and with their heads so close you might have covered them all with a tea-tray, a clear musical voice was heard to speak to the barmaid, and, by her direction, in walked into the council-chamber——Mr. Henry Little.

This visit greatly surprised Messrs. Parkin, Jobson, and Potter, and made them stare, and look at one another uneasily. But it did not surprise Grotait so much, and it came about in the simplest way. That

morning, at about eleven o'clock, Dr. Amboyne had called on Mrs. Little, and had asked Henry, rather stiffly, whether he was quite forgetting Life, Labour, and Capital. Now the young man could not but feel that, for some time past, he had used the good Doctor ill; had neglected and almost forgotten his benevolent hobby; so the Doctor's gentle reproach went to his heart, and he said, "Give me a day or two, sir, and I'll show you how ashamed I am of my selfish behaviour." True to this pledge, he collected all his notes together, and prepared a report, to be illustrated with drawings. He then went to Cheetham's, more as a matter of form than anything, to see if the condemned grindstone had been changed. To his infinite surprise he found it had not, and Bayne told him the reason. Henry was angry, and went direct to Grotait about it.

But as soon as he saw Jobson, and Parkin, and Potter, he started, and they started. "Oh!" said he, "I didn't expect to find so much good company. Why, here's the whole quorum."

"We will retire, sir, if you wish it."

"Not at all. My orders are to convert you all to Life, Labour, and Capital (Grotait pricked up his ears directly); and, if I succeed, the Devil will be the next to come round, no doubt. Well, Mr. Grotait, Simmons is on that same grindstone you and I condemned. And

all for a matter of four shillings. I find that, in your trade, the master provides the stone, but the grinder hangs and races it, which, in one sense, is time lost. Well, Simmons declines the new stone, unless Cheetham will pay him by time for hanging and racing it: Cheetham refuses; and so, between them, that idiot works on a faulty stone. Will you use your influence with the grinder?"

"Well, Mr. Little, now, between ourselves, don't you think it rather hard that the poor workman should have to hang and race the master's grindstone for nothing?"

"Why, they share the loss between them. The stone costs the master three pounds; and hanging it costs the workman only four or five shillings. Where's the grievance?"

"Hanging and racing a stone shortens the grinder's life; fills his lungs with grit. Is the workman to give Life and Labour for a forenoon; and is Capital to contribute nothing? Is that your view of Life, Labour, and Capital, young man?"

Henry was staggered a moment. "That is smart," said he. "But a rule of trade is a rule, till it is altered by consent of the parties that made it. Now, right or wrong, it is the rule of trade here that the small grinders find their own stones, and pay for power; but the saw-

grinders are better off, for they have not to find stones, nor power, and their only drawback is that they must hang and race a new stone, which costs the master sixty shillings. Cheetham is smarting under your rules, and you can't expect him to go against any rule that saves him a shilling."

"What does the grinder think?"

"You might as well ask what the grindstone thinks."

"Well, what does the grinder *say*, then?"

"Says he'd rather run the stone out, than lose a forenoon."

"Well, sir, it is his business."

"It may be a man's business to hang himself; but it is the bystanders' to hinder him."

"You mistake me. I mean that the grinder is the only man who knows whether a stone is safe."

"Well, but this grinder does not pretend his stone is safe. All he says is, safe or not, he'll run it out. So now the question is, will you pay four shillings from your box, for this blockhead's loss of time in hanging and racing a new stone?"

All the four secretaries opened their eyes with surprise at this. But Grotrait merely said he had no authority to do that; the funds of the Union were set apart for specified purposes.

“Very likely,” said Henry, getting warm: “but, when there’s life to be *taken*, your Union can find money irregularly; so why grudge it, when there’s life to be saved perhaps, and ten times cheaper than you pay for blood?”

“Young man,” said Grotrait, severely, “did you come here to insult us with these worn-out slanders?”

“No, but I came to see whether you secretaries, who can find pounds to assassinate men, and blow up women and children with gunpowder, can find shillings to secure the life of one of your own members; he risks it every time he mounts his horsing.”

“Well, sir, the application is without precedent, and I must decline it; but this I beg to do as courteously as the application has been made uncourteously.”

“Oh, it is easy to be polite when you’ve got no heart.”

“You are the first ever brought that charge against me.”

“You ought to be ashamed of yourself,” said Potter, warmly. “No heart! Mr. Grotait is known for a good husband, a tender father, and the truest friend in Hillsborough.”

The others echoed these sentiments warmly and sincerely; for, strange as it may appear to those who have not studied human nature at first hand, every word of this eulogy was strictly true.

“Thank you, gentlemen,” said Grotait. “But we must make allowances. Mr. Little is smarting under a gross and dastardly outrage, and also under a fair defeat; and thinks his opponents must be monsters. Now I should like to show him the contrary. Let Simmons take care of himself. You have given him good advice, and much to your credit: now have you nothing to say to us, on your own account?”

“Not a word,” said Henry, steadily.

“But suppose I could suggest a way by which” you could carry on your trade in Hillsborough, and offend nobody?”

“I should decline to hear it even. You and I are at war on that. You have done your worst, and I shall do my best to make you all smart for it, the moment I get a chance.”

Grotait’s cheek reddened with anger at this rebuff, and it cost him an effort to retain his friendly intentions. “Come, come,” said he, rather surlily, “don’t be in a hurry till you have heard the nature of my proposal. Here, Jess, a quart of the best ale. Now, to begin, let us drink and be comfortable together.”

He passed the glass to Little, first. But the young man’s blood was boiling with his wrongs, and this patronizing air irritated him to boot. He took the glass in his hand, “Here’s quick exposure—sudden death—

and sure damnation—to all hypocrites and assassins!” He drained the glass to this toast, flung sixpence on the table, and strode out, white with passion himself, and leaving startled faces behind.

“So be it,” said Grotait; and his wicked little eye glittered dangerously.

That same evening, a signal, well known to certain workmen in Hillsborough, peeped in the window of “The Cutler’s Arms.” And, in consequence, six or seven ill-conditioned fellows gathered about the doors and waited patiently for further information.

Amongst these was a sturdy fellow of about nine-and-twenty, whose existence was a puzzle to his neighbours. During the last seven years he had worked only eighteen months altogether. The rest of the time he had been on the Saw-Grinders’ box, receiving relief, viz.: seven shillings and sixpence weekly for himself, and two-and-sixpence for his wife, and two shillings for each child; and every now and then he would be seen with three or four sovereigns in his possession.

The name of this masterful beggar, of this invalid in theory, who, in fact, could eat three pounds of steak at a sitting, was Biggs; but it is a peculiarity of Hillsborough to defy baptismal names, and substitute others

deemed spicier. Out of the parish register and the records of the police courts, the scamp was only known as Dan Tucker.

This Dan stood, with others, loitering about "The Cutler's Arms."

Presently out came Grotait, and surveyed the rascally lot. He beckoned Dan, and retired. Dan went in after him.

"Drat his luck!" said one of the rejected candidates, "he always gets the job." The rest then dispersed.

Tucker was shown into a pitch dark room, and there a bargain was struck between him and men unseen. He and three more were to go to Cairnhope, and *do* Little. He was to avoid all those men who had lately stood at the door with him, and was to choose for his companions, Simmons the grinder, and one Sam Cole, a smooth, plausible fellow, that had been in many a dark job, unsuspected even by his wife and family, who were respectable.

Thus instructed, Tucker went to the other men, and soon reported to Grotait that he had got Cole and another all right, but that Simmons looked coldly on the job. He was in full work, for one thing, and said Little had had his squeak already, and he didn't see following him eleven miles off; he had, however, asked

him whether Little had a wife and children, which question he, Tucker, could not answer.

“But I can,” said Grotait. “He is a bachelor. You can tell Simmons so. There are reasons why Ned Simmons must be in this. Try him to-morrow, at dinner-time. Bid two pounds more ; and -his wife is near her time—tell him this job will help him buy her wine and things,” said the kind, parental, diabolical Grotait.

Next morning Henry worked with the pen for Doctor Amboyne till twelve o'clock. He then, still carrying out his friend's views, went down to Mr. Cheetham's works to talk to Simmons.

But he found an ill-looking fellow standing by the man's side, and close at his ear. This was no other than Dan Tucker, who by a neat coincidence was tempting him to *do* Little.

Yesterday's conversation had unsettled Simmons, and he did not come to work till twelve o'clock. He then fixed a small pulley-wheel to his grindstone, to make up for lost time.

He was still resisting the tempter, but more faintly than yesterday, when Little came in, and spoke to him. Both he and Dan were amazed at his appearance on the scene at that particular moment. They glared stupidly, but said nothing.

“Look here, Simmons,” said Little. “I have been to your friend Grotait, and asked him to pay you for what you call time lost in hanging and racing a new stone. He won’t do it. That is your *friend*. Now, I’m your *enemy*; so the Union says. Well, enemy or not, I’ll do what Grotait won’t. I’ll pay you the four shillings for lost time, if you will stop that stone at once, and hang another.”

“Why, what’s wrong with stone?”

“The best judge in Hillsborough condemned it; and now, if you are not running it with an undersized pulley-wheel, to try it worse!”

Simmons got stupid and irritated between the two. His bit of manhood revolted against Little’s offer, made whilst he was half lending his ear to Tucker’s proposal; and, on the other hand, that very offer irritated him with Tucker, for coming and tempting him to *do* this very Little, who was a good sort.

“—— you both!” said the rough fellow. “I wish you’d let me alone. Here I’ve lost my morning’s work already.” Then, to Little, “Mind thyself, old lad. Happen thou’s in more danger than I am.”

“What d’ye mean by that?” said Little, very sharply.

But Simmons saw he had gone too far, and now maintained a sullen silence.

Henry turned to Tucker. "I don't know who you are, but I call you to witness that I have done all I can for this idiot. Now, if he comes to harm, his blood be upon his own head."

Then Henry went off in dudgeon, and, meeting Bayne in the yard, had a long discussion with him on the subject.

The tempter took advantage of Little's angry departure, and steadily resumed his temptation.

But he was interrupted in his turn.

The defect in this grindstone was not so serious but that the stone might perhaps have been ground out with fair treatment; but, by fixing a small pulley-wheel, Simmons had caused it to rotate at furious speed. This tried it too hard, and it flew in two pieces, just as the grinder was pressing down a heavy saw on it with all his force.

One piece, weighing about five hundredweight, tore the horsing chains out of the floor, and went clean through the window (smashing the woodwork), out into the yard, and was descending on Little's head; but he heard the crash and saw it coming; he ran yelling out of the way, and dragged Bayne with him. The other fragment went straight up to the ceiling, and broke a heavy joist as if it had been a cane; then fell down again plump, and would have destroyed the grinder on

the spot, had he been there ; but the tremendous shock had sent him flying clean over the splatter-board, and he fell on his stomach on the wheelband of the next grindstone, and so close to the drum, that, before any one could recover the shock and seize him, the band drew him on to the drum, and the drum, which was drawing away from the window, pounded him against the wall, with cruel thuds.

One ran and screamed to stop the power, another to cut the big wheelbands. All this took several seconds ; and here seconds were torn flesh and broken bones. Just as Little darted into the room, pale with his own narrow escape, and awe-stricken at the cries of horror within, the other grinders succeeded in dragging out, from between the wall and the drum, a bag of broken bones and blood and grease, which, a minute before, was Ned Simmons, and was talking over a deed of violence to be done.

The others carried him and laid him on a horsing ; and there they still supported his head and his broken limbs, sick with horror.

The man's face was white, and his eyes stared, and his body quivered. They sprinkled him with water.

Then he muttered, " All right. I'm not much hurt. —Ay, but I am though. I'm done for."

After the first terror of the scene had passed, the

men were for taking him to the infirmary. But Little interposed, eagerly, "No, no. I'll pay the doctor myself sooner. He shall be nursed at home, and have all that skill can do to save him. Oh, why, why, would he not listen to me?"

A stretcher was got, and a mattress put on it, and they carried him through the streets, while one ran before to tell the unhappy wife, and Little took her address, and ran to Dr. Amboyne. The Doctor went instantly to the sufferer.

Tucker assisted to carry the victim home. He then returned to Grotait, and told him the news. Dan was not so hardened but what he blubbered in telling it, and Grotait's eyes were moist with sympathy.

They neither of them spoke out, and said, "This upsets our design on Little." Each waited to see whether that job was to go on. Each was ashamed to mention it now. So it came to a standstill.

As for Little, he was so shocked by this tragedy, and so anxious about its victim, that he would not go out to Cairnhope. He came, in the evening, to Doctor Amboyne, to inquire, "Can he live?"

"I can't say yet. He will never work again."

Then, after a silence, he fixed his eyes on young Little, and said, "I am going to make a trial of your

disposition. This is the man I suspected of blowing you up; and I'm of the same opinion still."

"Then he has got his deserts," were Henry's first words, after a pause of astonishment.

"Does that mean you forgive him, or you don't forgive him?"

"I daresay I should forgive the poor wretch, if he was to ask me."

"And not without?"

"No. I might try and put it out of my head; but that is all I could do."

"Is it true that you are the cause of his not being taken to the infirmary?"

"Yes, I said I'd pay out of my own pocket sooner; and I'm not the sort to go from my word. The man shall want for nothing, sir. But please don't ask me to love my enemies, and all that Rot. I scorn hypocrisy. Every man hates his enemies: he may hate 'em out like a man, or palaver 'em, and beg God to forgive 'em, (and that means damn 'em,) and hate 'em like a sneak; but he always hates 'em."

The Doctor laughed heartily. "Oh, how refreshing a thing it is to fall in with a fellow who speaks his real mind. However, I am not your enemy, am I?"

"No. You are the best friend I ever had—except my mother."

“I am glad you think so; because I have a favour to ask you.”

“Granted, before ever you speak.”

“I want to know, for certain, whether Simmons was the man who blew you up: and I see but one way of learning it. You must visit him and be kind to him; and then, my art tells me, he won't leave the world without telling you. Oblige me by taking him this bottle of wine, at once, and also this sedative, which you can administer if he is in violent pain, but not otherwise.”

“Doctor,” said the young man, “you always get your own way with me. And so you ought.”

Little stood by Simmons's bedside.

The man's eye was set, his cheek streaked with red, and his head was bandaged. He laboured in breathing.

Young Little looked at him gravely, and wondered whether this battered figure was really the man who had so nearly destroyed him.

After some minutes of this contemplation, he said, gravely, “Simmons, I have brought you some wine.”

The man stared at him, and seemed confused. He made no reply.

“Give me a spoon,” said Henry.

Mrs. Simmons sat by the bedside rocking herself; she was stupefied with grief: but her sister, a handy girl, had come to her in her trouble: she brought Henry a spoon directly.

He poured out a little wine, and put it to the sufferer's lips. He drank it, and said it was rare good stuff. Henry gave him a little more.

Simmons then looked at him more intelligently and attentively, and gave a sort of shiver. “Who be you?”

“Henry Little; who advised you not to run that stone.”

“Ah!” said Simmons, “I thought it was you.” He seemed puzzled. But, after a while, he said, “I wish I had hearkened thee, lad. Give me some more of yonder stuff. What is it?”

“Port wine. Then he turned to the girl, and gave her a sovereign, and sent her out for some mutton chops. “Meat and wine are all the physic you are to have, my poor fellow.”

“It won't be for long, lad. And a good job too. For I'm a bad 'un. I'm a bad 'un.”

Henry then turned to the poor woman, and tried to say something to console her, but the words stuck in his throat. She was evidently near her con-

finement; and there lay her husband, worse than in his grave. Little broke down himself, while trying to comfort her.

The sufferer heard him, and said, all of a sudden, "Hold a light here."

Henry took the candle, and held it over him.

"Nay, nay, it is thy face I want to see."

Henry was puzzled at the request, but did as he was asked.

Simmons gave a groan. "Ay," said he, "thou's all right. And I lie here. That seems queer."

The sister now returned, and Henry wrote her his address, and conversed with her, and told her the whole story of the grindstone, and said that, as he had hindered Simmons from being taken to the infirmary, he felt bound to see he did not suffer by that interference. He gave her his address, and said, if anything was wanted, she must come to him, or to his mother if he should be out.

No doubt the women talked of his kindness by the sick bed, and Simmons heard it.

Early in the morning Eliza Watney called at Little's house, with her eyes very red, and said her brother-in-law wanted to speak to him.

He went with her directly; and, on the road, asked her what it was about.

“I’m ashamed to tell you,” said she, and burst out crying. “But I hope God will reward you; and forgive him: he is a very ignorant man.”

“Here I am, Simmons.”

“So I see.”

“Anything I can do for you?”

“No.”

“You sent for me.”

“Did I? Well, I daresay I did. But gi’ me time. Gi’ me time. It’s noane so easy to look a man in the face, and tell him what I’m to tell thee. But I can’t die with it on me. It chokes me, ever since you brought me yonder stuff, and the women set a talking. I say—old lad—’twas I did thee yon little job at Cheetham’s. But I knew no better.”

There was a dead silence. And then Henry spoke.

“Who set you on?”

“Nay, that’s their business.”

“How did you do it?”

At this question—will it be believed?—the penitent’s eye twinkled with momentary vanity. “I fastened a teacup to an iron rake, and filled the cup with powder; then I passed it in, and spilt the powder out of cup, and raked it into the smithy slack, and so on, filling and raking in. But I did thee one good turn,

lad ; I put powder as far from bellows as I could. Eh, but I was a bad 'un to do the like to thee : and thou's a good 'un to come here. When I saw thee lie there, all scorched and shaking, I didn't like my work ; and now I hate it. But I knew no better at the time. And, you see, I've got it worse myself. And cheap served too."

"Ob, Mr. Little," said Elizabeth Watney ; "*try* and forgive him."

"My girl," said Henry, solemnly, "I thought I never could forgive the man who did that cruel deed to me, and I had never injured any one. But it is hard to know one's own mind, let alone another man's. Now I look at him lying pale and battered there, it seems all wiped out. I forgive you, my poor fellow, and I hope God will forgive you too."

"Nay. He is not so soft as thou. This is how He forgives me. But I knew no better. Old gal, learn the young 'un to read, that's coming just as I'm going ; it is sore against a chap if he can't read. Right and wrong, d—n 'em, they are locked up in books, I think ; locked away from a chap like me. I know a little better now. But, eh dear, dear, it is come too late." And now the poor wretch began to cry at a gleam of knowledge of right and wrong having come to him only just when he could no longer profit by it.

Henry left him at last, with the tears in his eyes. He promised them all to come every day.

He called on Dr. Amboyne, and said, "You are always right, Doctor. Simmons was the man. He has owned it, and I forgave him."

He then went and told Mr. Holdfast. That gentleman was much pleased at the discovery, and said, "Ah, but who employed him? That is what you must discover."

"I will try," said Henry. "The poor fellow had half a mind to make a clean breast; but I didn't like to worry him over it."

Returning home he fell in with Grotait and Parkin. They were talking earnestly at the door of a public-house, and the question they were discussing was whether or not Little's affair should be revived.

They were both a good deal staggered by the fate of Simmons, Parkin especially, who was rather superstitious. He had changed sides, and was now inclined to connive, or, at all events, to temporize; to abandon the matter till a more convenient time. Grotait, on the other hand, whose vanity the young man had irritated, was bent on dismounting his forge. But even he had cooled a little, and was now disinclined to violence. He suggested that it must be easy to drive a smith out of a

church, by going to the parochial authorities ; and they could also send Little an anonymous letter, to tell him the Trades had their eyes on him ; by this double stroke, they would probably bring him to some reasonable terms.

It certainly was a most unfortunate thing that Little passed that way just then ; unfortunate that Youth is so impetuous.

He crossed the street to speak to these two potentates, whom it was his interest to let alone—if he could only have known it.

“ Well, gentlemen, have you seen Simmons ? ”

“ No,” said Mr. Parkin.

“ What, not been to see the poor fellow, who owes his death to you ? ”

“ He is not dead yet.”

“ No, thank Heaven ! He has got a good work to do first ; some hypocrites, assassins, and cowards to expose.”

Parkin turned pale ; Grotait’s eye glistened like a snake’s : he made Parkin a rapid signal to say nothing, but only listen.

“ He has begun by telling me who it was that put gunpowder into my forge, and how it was done. I have forgiven him. He was only the tool of much worse villains—base, cowardly, sneaking villains. Those I

shall not forgive. Oh, I shall know all about it before long. Good morning."

This information and threat, and the vindictive bitterness and resolution with which the young man had delivered it, struck terror into the gentle Parkin, and shook even Grotait. The latter, however, soon recovered himself, and it became a battle for life or death between him and Little.

He invited Parkin to his own place, and there the pair sat closeted.

Dan Tucker and Sam Cole were sent for.

Tucker came first. He was instantly despatched to Simmons, with money from the Saw-Grinders' box. He was to ascertain how much Simmons had let out, and to adjure him to be true to the Trade, and split on no man but himself. When he had been gone about twenty minutes, Sam Cole came in, and was instructed to get two other men in place of Simmons, and be in readiness to do Little.

By-and-by Tucker returned with news. Simmons had at present split only on himself; but the women were evidently in love with Little; said he was their only friend; and he, Tucker, foresaw that, with their co-operation, Simmons would be turned inside out by Little before he died.

Grotait struck his hand on the table. "The

Unions are in danger," said he. "There is but one way; Little must be made so that he can't leave Cairnhope while Simmons is alive."

So important did the crisis appear to him, that he insisted on Parkin going with him at once to Cairnhope, to reconnoitre the ground.

Parkin had a gig and a fast horse; so, in ten minutes more, they were on the road.

They reached Cairnhope, put up at the village inn, and soon extracted some particulars about the church. They went up to it, and examined it, and Grotait gave Parkin a leg up, to peer through the window

In this position they were nailed by old George.

"What be you at?"

"What is that to you?" said Grotait.

"It is plenty. You mustn't come trespassing here. Squire won't have it."

"Trespassing in a churchyard! Why it belongs to all the world."

"Nay, this one belongs to the Lord o' the manor."

"Well, we won't hurt your church. Who keeps the key?"

"Squire Raby."

Old George from this moment followed them about everywhere, grumbling at their heels, like a mastiff.

Grotait, however, treated him with cool contempt,

and proceeded to make a sketch of the door, and a little map showing how the church could be approached from Hillsborough on foot without passing through Cairnhope village. This done, he went back with Parkin to the inn, and thence to Hillsborough.

It was old Christmas Eve. Henry was working at his forge, little dreaming of danger. Yet it was close at hand, and from two distinct quarters.

Four men, with crape masks, and provided with all manner of tools, and armed with bludgeons, were creeping about the churchyard, examining and listening. Their orders were to make Little so that he should not leave Cairnhope for a month. And that, in plain English, meant to beat him within an inch of his life, if not kill him.

At the same time, a body of nine men were stealing up the road, with designs scarcely less hostile to Little.

These assailants were as yet at a considerable distance ; but more formidable in appearance than the others, being most of them armed with swords, and led by a man with a double-barrelled gun.

Grotait's men, having well surveyed the ground, now crept softly up to the porch, and examined the lock.

The key was inside, and they saw no means of

forcing the lock without making a noise, and putting their victim on his guard.

After a long whispered consultation, they resolved to unscrew the hinges.

These hinges were of great length, and were nailed upon the door, but screwed into the doorpost with four screws each.

Two men, with excellent tools, and masters of the business, went softly to work. One stood, and worked on the upper screws; the other kneeled, and unfastened the lower screws.

They made no more noise than a rat gnawing; yet, such was their caution, and determination to surprise their victim, that they timed all their work by Little's. Whenever the blows of his hammer intermitted, they left off; and began again when he did.

When all the screws were out but two, one above, one below, they beckoned the other two men, and these two drove large gimlets into the door, and so held it that it might not fall forward when the last screw should come out.

“Are all screws out?” whispered Cole, who was the leader.

“Ay,” was the whispered reply.

“ Then put in two more gimlets.

That was done.

“ Now, men,” whispered Cole. “ Lay the door softly down outside ; then, up sticks—into church—and *do him !*”

CHAPTER II.

IF Mr. Coventry, before he set all this mischief moving, could have seen the *inside* of Grace Carden's letter to Henry Little !

“DEAR MR. LITTLE,—I do not know whether I ought to write to you at all, nor whether it is delicate of me to say what I am going ; but you have saved my life, and I do so want to do all I can to atone for the pain I have given you, who have been so good to me. I am afraid you will never know happiness, if you waste your invaluable life longing after what is impossible. There is an impassable barrier between you and me. But you might be happy if you would condescend to take my advice, and let yourself see the beauty and the goodness of another. The person who bears this letter comes nearer to perfection than any other woman I ever saw. If you would trust my judgment (and, believe me I am not to be mistaken in one of my own sex), if you could turn your heart towards her, she would make you

very happy. I am sure she could love you devotedly, if she only heard those words from your lips, which every woman requires to hear before she surrenders her affections. Pray do not be angry with me ; pray do not think it costs me little to give this strange but honest advice to one I admire so. But I feel it would be so weak and selfish in me to cling to that, which, sooner or later, I must resign, and to make so many persons unhappy, when all might be happy, except perhaps myself.

“ Once more, forgive me. Do not think me blind ; do not think me heartless ; but say, this is a poor girl, who is sadly perplexed, and is trying very hard to be good and wise, and not selfish.

“ One line, to say you will consider my advice, and never hate nor despise

“ Your grateful and unhappy friend,

“ GRACE CARDEN.”

When she had despatched this letter, she felt heroic.

The next day she wished she had not written it, and awaited the reply with anxiety.

The next day, she began to wonder at Little's silence ; and by-and-by she was offended at it. Surely what she had written with so great an effort was worth a reply.

Finally, she got it into her head that Little despised

her. Upon this, she was angry with him for not seeing what a sacrifice she had made, and for despising her, instead of admiring her a little, and pitying her ever so much. The old story, in short—a girl vexed with a man for letting her throw dust in his eyes.

And, if she was vexed with Little for not appreciating her sacrifice, she was quite as angry with Coventry and Jael for being the causes of that unappreciated sacrifice. So then she was irritable and cross. But she could not be that long; so she fell into a languid, listless state: and then she let herself drift. She never sent Jael to the church again.

Mr. Coventry watched all her moods; and, when she reached the listless stage, he came softly on again, and began to recover his lost ground.

On the fifth of January occurred a rather curious coincidence. In Hillsborough Dr. Amboyne offered his services to Mrs. Little to reconcile her and her brother. Mrs. Little feared the proposal came too late; but showed an inclination to be reconciled for Henry's sake. But Henry said he would never be reconciled to a man who had insulted his mother. He then reminded her she had sent him clandestinely into Raby Hall to see her picture. "And what did I see? Your picture was turned with its face to the wall, and insulting words

written on the back—‘Gone into trade.’ I didn’t mean to tell you, mother; but you see I have. And, after that, you may be reconciled to the old scoundrel if you like; but don’t ask me.” Mrs. Little was deeply wounded by this revelation. She tried to make light of it, but failed. She had been a beauty, and the affront was too bitter. Said she, “You mustn’t judge him like other people: he was always so very eccentric. Turn my picture to the wall! My poor picture! Oh, Guy, Guy, could one mother have borne you and me?” Amboyne had not a word more to say: he was indignant himself.

Now that very afternoon, as if by the influence of what they call a brain-wave, Grace Carden, who felt herself much stronger with Mr. Raby than when she first came, was moved to ask him, with many apologies, and no little inward tremor, whether she might see the other side of that very picture before she went.

“What for?”

“Don’t be angry, uncle dear. Curiosity.”

“I do not like to refuse you anything, Grace. But—— Well, if I lend you the key, will you satisfy your curiosity, and then replace the picture as it is?”

“Yes, I will.”

“And you shall do it when I am not in the room. It would only open wounds that time has skinned.

I'll bring you down the key at dinner-time." Then, assuming a lighter tone, "Your curiosity will be punished; you will see your rival in beauty. That will be new to you."

Grace was half frightened at her own success, and I doubt whether she would ever have asked for the key again; but Raby's word was his bond; he handed her the key at dinner-time.

Her eyes sparkled when she got it; but she was not to open it before him; so she fell thinking: and she determined to get the gentlemen into the drawing-room as soon as she could, and then slip back and see this famous picture.

Accordingly she left the table rather earlier than usual, and sat down to her piano in the drawing-room.

But alas, her little manœuvre was defeated. Instead of the gentlemen leaving the dining-room, a servant was sent to recall her.

It was old Christmas Eve, and the Mummings were come.

Now, of all the old customs Mr. Raby had promised her, this was the pearl.

Accordingly, her curiosity took for the time another turn, and she was soon seated in the dining-room, with Mr. Raby and Mr. Coventry, awaiting the Mummings.

The servants then came in, and, when all were

ready, the sound of a fiddle was heard, and a fiddler, grotesquely dressed, entered along with two clowns, one called the Tommy, dressed in chintz and a fox's skin over his shoulders and a fox's head for a cap; and one, called the Bessy, in a woman's gown and beaver hat.

This pair introduced the true *dramatis personæ*, to the drollest violin accompaniment, consisting of chords till the end of each verse, and then a few notes of melody.

Now the first that I call on
Is George our noble king,
Long time he has been at war,
Good tidings back he'll bring.
Too-ral-loo.

Thereupon in came a man, with black breeches and red stripes at the side, a white shirt decked with ribbons over his waistcoat, and a little hat with streamers, and a sword.

The clown walked round in a ring, and King George followed him, holding his sword upright.

Meantime the female clown chanted,—

The next that we call on,
He is a squire's son,
He's like to lose his love,
Because he is so young.
Too-ral-loo.

The Squire's Son followed King George round the

ring; and the clowns, marching and singing at the head, introduced another, and then another, sword-dancer, all attired like the first, until there were five marching round and round, each with his sword upright.

Then Foxey sang, to a violin accompaniment,

Now fiddler, then, take up thy fiddle,
Play the lads their hearts' desire,
Or else we'll break thy fiddle,
And fling thee a back o' the fire.

On this the fiddler instantly played a dance-tune peculiar to this occasion, and the five sword-dancers danced by themselves in a ring, holding their swords out so as to form a cone.

Then a knot, prepared beforehand, was slipped over the swords, and all the swords so knotted were held aloft by the first dancer; he danced in the centre awhile, under the connected swords, then deftly drew his own sword out and handed it to the second dancer; the second gave the third dancer his sword, and so on, in rotation, till all the swords were resumed.

Raby's eyes sparkled with delight at all this, and he whispered his comments on the verses and the dance.

"King George!" said he. "Bosh! This is the old story of St. George and the Dragon, overburdened

with modern additions." As to the dance, he assured her that, though danced in honour of old Christmas, it was older than Christianity, and came from the ancient Goths and Swedes.

These comments were interrupted by a man, with a white face, who burst into the assembly crying, "Will ye believe me now? Cairnhope old church is all a-fire!"

CHAPTER III.

“AY, Squire,” said Abel Eaves, for he was the bearer of this strange news, “ye wouldn’t believe *me*: now come and see for yourself.”

This announcement set all staring; and George the blacksmith did but utter the general sentiment, when, suddenly dropping his assumed character of King George, he said, “Bless us and save us! True Christmas Eve; and Cairnhope old church alight!”

Then there was a furious buzz of tongues, and, in the midst of it, Mr. Raby disappeared, and the sword-dancers returned to the kitchen, talking over this strange matter as they went.

Grace retired to the drawing-room followed by Coventry.

She sat silent some time, and he watched her keenly.

“I wonder what has become of Mr. Raby?”

Mr. Coventry did not know.

“I hope he is not going out.”

“I should think not. It is a very cold night; clear, but frosty.”

“Surely he would never go to see.”

“Shall I inquire?”

“No; that might put it into his head. But I wish I knew where he was.”

Presently a servant brought the tea in.

Miss Carden inquired after Mr. Raby.

“He is gone out, Miss; but he won't be long, I was to tell you.”

Grace felt terribly uneasy and restless; rang the bell and asked for Jael Dence. The reply was that she had not been to the hall that day.

But soon afterwards, Jael came up from the village, and went into the kitchen of Raby. There she heard news, which soon took her into the drawing-room.

“Oh, Miss,” said she, “do you know where the Squire is?”

“Gone to the church?” asked Grace, trembling.

“Ay, and all the sword-dancers at his back.” And she stood there and wrung her hands with dismay.

The ancients had a proverb, “Better is an army of stags with a lion for their leader, than an army of lions with a stag for their leader.” The Cairnhope sword-

dancers, though stout fellows and strong against a mortal foe, were but stags against the supernatural; yet, led by Guy Raby, they advanced upon the old church with a pretty bold front, only they kept twenty yards in their leader's rear. The order was to march in dead silence.

At the last turn in the road their leader suddenly halted, and, kneeling on one knee, waved to his men to keep quiet: he had seen several dark figures busy about the porch.

After many minutes of thrilling, yet chilling expectation, he rose, and told his men in a whisper to follow him again.

The pace was now expedited greatly, and still Mr. Raby, with his double-barrelled gun in his hand, maintained a lead of some yards, and his men followed as noiselessly as they could, and made for the church: sure enough it was lighted inside.

The young man who was thus beset by two distinct bands of enemies, deserved a very different fate at the hands of his fellow-creatures.

For, at this moment, though anything but happy himself, he was working some hours every day for the good of mankind; and was every day visiting as a friend

the battered saw-grinder who had once put his own life in mortal peril.

He had not fathomed the letter Grace had sent him. He was a young man and a straightforward ; he did not understand the amiable defects of the female character. He studied every line of this letter, and it angered and almost disgusted him. It was the letter of a lady ; but beneath the surface of gentleness and politeness lay a proposal, which he considered mean and cold-blooded. It lowered his esteem for her.

His pride and indignation were roused, and battled with his love, and they were aided by the healthy invigorating habits, into which Dr. Amboyne had at last inveigled him, and so he resisted : he wrote more than one letter in reply to Grace Carden ; but, when he came to read them over and compare them with her gentle effusion, he was ashamed of his harshness, and would not send the letter.

He fought on ; philanthropy in Hillsborough, forging in Cairnhope Church ; and still he dreamed strange dreams now and then : for who can work, both night and day, as this man did—with impunity ?

One night he dreamed that he was working at his forge, when suddenly the floor of the aisle burst, and a dead knight sprang from the grave with a single bound, and stood erect before him, in rusty armour : out of his

helmet looked two eyes like black diamonds, and a nose like a falcon's. Yet, by one of the droll contradictions of a dream, this impetuous, warlike form no sooner opened its lips, than out issued a lackadaisical whine. "See my breastplate, good sir," said he. "It was bright as silver when I made it—I was like you, I forged my own weapons, forged them with these hands.—But now the damp of the grave have rusted it. Odsbodikins! is this a thing for a good knight to appear in before his judge? And to morrow is Doomsday, so they all say."

Then Henry pitied the poor simple knight (in his dream), and offered his services to polish the corslet up a bit against that great occasion. He pointed towards his forge, and the knight marched to it, in three wide steps that savoured strongly of theatrical burlesque. But the moment he saw the specimens of Henry's work lying about, he drew back, and wheeled upon the man of the day with huge disdain. "What," said he, "do you forge toys! Learn that a gentleman can only forge those weapons of war that gentlemen do use. And I took you for a Raby!"

With these bitter words he vanished, with flashing eyes and a look of magnificent scorn, and left his fiery, haughty, features imprinted clearly on Henry's memory.

One evening, as he plied his hammer, he heard a light sound at a window, in an interval of his own noise. He looked hastily up, and caught a momentary sight of a face disappearing from the window. It was gone like a flash even as he caught sight of it.

Transient as the glance was, it shook him greatly. He heated a bar of iron white hot at one end, and sallied out into the night. But there was not a creature to be seen.

Then he called aloud, "Who's there?" No reply. "Jael, was it you?" Dead silence.

He returned to his work, and set the appearance down to an ocular illusion. But his dreams had been so vivid, that this really seemed only one step more into the realms of hallucination.

This was an unfortunate view of the matter.

On old Christmas Eve he lighted the fires in his mausoleum first, and at last succeeded in writing a letter to Grace Carden. He got out of the difficulty in the best way, by making it very short. He put it in an envelope, and addressed it, intending to give it to Jael Dence, from whom he was always expecting a second visit.

He then lighted his forge, and soon the old walls were ringing again with the blows of his hammer.

It was ten o'clock at night; a clear frosty night;

but he was heated and perspiring with his ardent work, when, all of a sudden, a cold air seemed to come in upon him from a new quarter—the door. He left his forge, and took a few steps to where he could see the door. Instead of the door, he saw the blue sky.

He uttered an exclamation, and rubbed his eyes.

It was no hallucination. The door lay flat on the ground, and the stars glittered in the horizon.

Young Little ran towards the door; but, when he got near it, he paused, and a dire misgiving quelled him. A workman soon recognizes a workman's hand; and he saw Hillsborough cunning and skill in this feat, and Hillsborough cunning and cruelty lurking in ambush at the door.

He went back to his forge, and, the truth must be told, his knees felt weak under him with fears of what was to come.

He searched about for weapons, and could find nothing to protect him against numbers. Pistols he had; but, from a wretched over-security, he had never brought them to Cairnhope Church.

Oh, it was an era of agony that minute, in which, after avoiding the ambuscade that he felt sure awaited him at the door, he had nothing on earth he could do but wait and see what was to come next.

He knew that however small his chance of escape by fighting, it was his only one; and he resolved to receive the attack where he was. He blew his bellows and, cold at heart, affected to forge.

Dusky forms stole into the old church.

CHAPTER IV.

LITTLE blew his coals to a white heat : then took his hammer into his left hand, and his little iron shovel, a weapon about two feet long, into his right.

Three assailants crept towards him, and his position was such that two at least could assail him front and rear. He counted on that, and measured their approach with pale cheek but glittering eye, and thrust his shovel deep into the white coals.

They crept nearer and nearer, and, at last, made an almost simultaneous rush on him back and front.

The man in his rear was a shade in advance of the other. Little, whose whole soul was in arms, had calculated on this, and, turning as they came at him, sent a shovelful of fiery coals into that nearest assailant's face, then stepped swiftly out of the way of the other, who struck at him too immediately for him to parry; ere he could recover the wasted blow, Little's hot shovel came down on his head with tremendous

force, and laid him senseless and bleeding on the earth, with blood running from his ears.

Little ladled the coals right and left on the other two assailants, one of whom was already yelling with the pain of the first shovelful; then, vaulting suddenly over a pew, he ran for the door.

There he was encountered by Sam Colé, an accomplished cudgel-player, who parried his blows coolly, and gave him a severe rap on the head that dazzled him. But he fought on, till he heard footsteps coming behind him, and then rage and despair seized him, he drew back, shifted his hammer into his right hand and hurled it with all his force at Cole's breast, for he feared to miss his head. Had it struck him on the breast, delivered as it was, it would probably have smashed his breastbone, and killed him; but it struck him on his throat, which was, in some degree, protected by a muffler: it struck him and sent him flying like a feather: he fell on his back in the porch, yards from where he received that prodigious blow.

Henry was bounding out after him, when he was seized from behind, and the next moment another seized him too, and his right hand was now disarmed by throwing away the hammer.

He struggled furiously with them, and twice he shook them off, and struck them with his fist, and

jobbed them with his shovel quick and short, as a horse kicking.

But one was cunning enough to make a feint at his face, and then fall down and lay hold of his knees : he was about to pulverize this fellow with one blow of his shovel, when the other flung his arms round him. It became a mere struggle. Such was his fury and his vigour, however, that they could not master him. He played his head like a snake, so that they could not seize him disadvantageously ; and at last he dropped his shovel and got them both by the throat, and grasped them so fiercely that their faces were purple, and their eyes beginning to fix, when, to his dismay, he received a violent blow on the right arm that nearly broke it : he let go, with a cry of pain, and with his left hand twisted the other man round so quickly, that he received the next blow of Cole's cudgel. Then he dashed his left fist into Cole's eye, who staggered, but still barred the way ; so Little rushed upon him, and got him by the throat, and would soon have settled him : but the others recovered themselves ere he could squeeze all the wind out of Cole, and it became a struggle of three to one.

He dragged them all three about with him ; he kicked, he hit, he did everything that a man with one hand, and a lion's heart, could do.

But gradually they got the better of him ; and at last it came to this, that two were struggling on the ground with him, and Cole standing over them all three, ready to strike.

“Now, hold him so, while I settle him,” cried Cole, and raised his murderous cudgel.

It came down on Little’s shoulder, and only just missed his head.

Again it came down, and with terrible force.

Up to this time he had fought as mute as a fox. But now that it had come to mere butchery, he cried out, in his agony, “They’ll kill me.—My mother!—Help! Murder! Help!”

“Ay! thou’lt never forge no more!” roared Cole, and thwack came down the crushing bludgeon.

“Help! Murder! Help!” screamed the victim, more faintly; and at the next blow more faintly still.

But again the murderous cudgel was lifted high, to descend upon his young head.

As the confederates held the now breathless and despairing victim to receive the blow, and the butcher, with one eye closed by Henry’s fist, but the other gleaming savagely, raised the cudgel to finish him, Henry saw a huge tongue of flame pour out at them all, from outside the church, and a report, that sounded like a cannon, was accompanied by the vicious ping

of shot. Cole screamed and yelled, and dropped his cudgel, and his face was covered with blood in a moment; he yelled, and covered his face with his hands; and instantly came another flash, another report, another cruel ping of shot, and this time his hands were covered with blood.

The others rolled yelling out of the line of fire, and ran up to the aisle for their lives.

Cole tried to follow; but Henry, though sick and weak with the blows, caught him, and clung to his knees, and the next moment the place was filled with men carrying torches and gleaming swords, and led by a gentleman, who stood over Henry, in evening-dress, but with the haughty expanded nostrils, the brilliant black eyes, and all the features of that knight in rusty armour, who had come to him in his dream, and left him with scorn.

At this moment a crash was heard: two of the culprits, with desperate agility, had leaped on to the vestry-chest, and from that on to the horse, and from him headlong out at the window.

Mr. Raby despatched all his men but one in pursuit, with this brief order,—“Take them, alive or dead,—doesn’t matter which,—they are only cutlers; and cowards.”

His next word was to Cole. “What! three

blackguards to one! That's how Hillsborough fights, eh?"

"I'm not a blackguard," said Henry, faintly.

"That remains to be proved, sir," said Raby, grimly.

Henry made answer by fainting away.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN Henry Little came to himself, he was seated on men's hands, and being carried through the keen refreshing air. Mr. Raby was striding on in front; the horse's hoofs were clamping along on the hard road behind; and he himself was surrounded by swordsmen in fantastic dresses.

He opened his eyes, and thought, of course, it was another vision. But no, the man, with whose blows his body was sore, and his right arm utterly numbed, walked close to him between two sword-dancers, with Raby-marks and Little-marks upon him, viz., a face spotted with blood, and a black eye.

Little sighed.

"Eh, that's music to me," said a friendly voice close to him. It was the King George of the lyrical drama, and, out of poetry, George the blacksmith.

"What, it is you, is it?" said Little.

"Ay, sir, and a joyful man to hear you speak again. The cowardly varmint! And to think they

have all got clear but this one! Are ye sore hurt, sir?"

"I'm in awful pain, but no bones broken." Then, in a whisper, "Where are you taking me, George?"

"To Raby Hall," was the whispered reply.

"Not for all the world! If you are my friend, put me down, and let me slip away."

"Don't ask me, don't ask me," said George, in great distress. "How could I look Squire in the face? He did put you in my charge."

"Then I'm a prisoner!" said Henry, sternly.

George hung his head, but made no reply.

Henry also maintained a sullen silence after that.

The lights of Raby came in sight.

That house contained two women, who awaited the result of the nocturnal expedition with terrible anxiety.

Its fate, they both felt, had been determined before they even knew that the expedition had started.

They had nothing to do but to wait, and pray that Henry had made his escape, or else had not been so mad as to attempt resistance.

In this view of things, the number and even the arms of his assailants were some comfort to them, as rendering resistance impossible.

As for Mr. Coventry, he was secretly delighted. His conscience was relieved. Raby would now drive his rival out of the church and out of the county without the help of the Trades, and his act of treachery and bad faith would be harmless. Things had taken the happiest possible turn for him.

For all that, this courtier affected sympathy, and even some anxiety, to please Miss Carden, and divert all suspicion from himself. But the true ring was wanting to his words, and both the women felt them jar, and got away from him, and laid their heads together, in agitated whispers. And the result was, they put shawls over their heads, and went together out into the night.

They ran up the road, sighing and clasping their hands, but no longer speaking.

At the first turn they saw the whole body coming towards them.

"I'll soon know," said Jael, struggling with her agitation. "Don't you be seen, Miss; that might anger the Squire; and, oh, he will be a wrathful man this night, if he caught him working in yonder church."

Grace then slipped back, and Jael ran on. But no sooner did she come up with the party, than Raby ordered her back, in a tone she dared not resist.

She ran back, and told Grace they were carrying

him in, hurt, and the Squire's eyes were like hot coals.

Grace slipped into the drawing-room, and kept the door ajar.

Soon afterwards, Raby, his men, and his prisoners, entered the hall, and Grace heard Raby say, "Bring the prisoners into the dining-room."

Grace Carden sat down, and leaned her head upon her hand, and her little foot beat the ground, all in a flutter.

But this ended in a spirited resolve. She rose, pale, but firm, and said, "Come with me, Jael;" and she walked straight into the dining-room. Coventry strolled in after her.

The room was still brilliantly lighted. Mr. Raby was seated at his writing-table at the far end, and the prisoners, well guarded, stood ready to be examined.

"You can't come in here," was Mr. Raby's first word to Grace.

But she was prepared for this, and stood her ground. "Excuse me, dear uncle, but I wish to see you administer justice; and, besides, I believe I can tell you something about one of the prisoners."

"Indeed! that alters the case. Somebody give Miss Carden a chair."

She sat down, and fixed her eyes upon Henry

Little,—eyes that said plainly, “I shall defend you, if necessary:” his pale cheek was flushing at sight of her.

Mr. Raby arranged his papers to make notes, and turned to Cole. “The charge against you is, that you were seen this night by several persons engaged in an assault of a cruel and aggravated character. You, and two other men, attacked and overpowered an individual here present; and, while he was helpless, and on the ground, you were seen to raise a heavy cudgel——(Got the cudgel, George?)”

“Ay, your worship, here 'tis.”

“—And to strike him several times on the head and limbs, with all your force.”

“Oh, cruel! cruel!”

“This won't do, Miss Carden; no observations, please. In consequence of which blows he soon after swooned away, and was for some time unconscious, and ——”

“Oh!”

“—For' aught I know, may have received some permanent injury.”

“Not he,” said Cole; “he's all right. I'm the only man that is hurt; and I've got it hot; he hit me with his hammer, and knocked me down like a bullock. He's given me this black eye too.”

“ In self-defence, apparently. Which party attacked the other first ? ”

“ Why they attacked me, of course,” said Henry.
“ Four of them.”

“ Four ! I saw but three.”

“ Oh, I settled one at starting, up near the forge. Didn't you find him ? ” (This to George.)

“ Nay, we found none of the trash but this,” indicating Cole, with a contemptuous jerk of the thumb.

“ Now, don't all speak at once,” said Mr. Raby.
“ My advice to *you* is to say nothing, or you'll probably make bad worse. But if you choose to say anything, I'm bound to hear it.”

“ Well, sir,” said Cole, in a carneying voice, “ what I say is this : what need we go to law over this ? If you go against me for hitting him with a stick, after he had hit me with a blacksmith's hammer, I shall have to go against you for shooting me with a gun.”

“ That is between you and me, sir. You will find a bystander may shoot a malefactor to save the life of a citizen. Confine your defence, at present, to the point at issue. Have you any excuse, as against this young man ? ” (To Henry.)—“ You look pale. You can sit down till your turn comes.”

“ Not in this house.”

“And why not in this house, pray? Is your own house a better?”

No answer from Henry. A look of amazement and alarm from Grace. But she was afraid to utter a word, after the admonition she had received.

“Well, sir,” said Cole, “he was desecrating a church.”

“So he was, and I shall talk to him in his turn. But you desecrated it worse. He turned it into a blacksmith’s shop; you turned it into a shambles. I shall commit you. You will be taken to Hillsborough to-morrow; to-night you will remain in my strong-room. Fling him down a mattress and some blankets, and give him plenty to eat and drink; I wouldn’t starve the devil on old Christmas Eve. There, take him away. Stop; search his pockets before you leave him alone.

Cole was taken away, and Henry’s turn came.

Just before this examination commenced, Grace clasped her hands, and cast a deprecating look on Henry, as much as to say, “Be moderate.” And then her eyes roved to and fro, and the whole woman was in arms, and on the watch.

Mr. Raby began on him. “As for you, your offence is not so criminal in the eye of the law: but it is bad enough; you have broken into a church by unlawful means; you have turned it into a smithy, defiled the

graves of the dead, and turned the tomb of a good knight into an oven, to the scandal of men and the dishonour of God. Have you any excuse to offer?"

"Plenty. I was plying an honest trade, in a country where freedom is the law. The Hillsborough Unions combined against me, and restrained my freedom, and threatened my life, ay, and attempted my life too, before to-day: and so the injustice and cruelty of men drove me to a sanctuary, me and my livelihood. Blame the Trades, blame the public laws, blame the useless police: but you can't blame me; a man must live."

"Why not set up your shop in the village? Why wantonly desecrate a church?"

"The church was more secret, and more safe: and nobody worships in it. The wind and the weather are allowed to destroy it; you care so little for it you let it moulder; then why howl if a fellow uses it and keeps it warm?"

At this sally there was a broad rustic laugh, which, however, Mr. Raby quelled with one glance of his eye.

"Come, don't be impertinent," said he to Little.

"Then don't you provoke a fellow," cried Henry, raising his voice.

Grace clasped her hands in dismay.

Jael Dence said, in her gravest and most mellow

voice, "You do forget the good Squire saved your life this very night."

This was like oil on all the waters.

"Well, certainly I oughtn't to forget that," said Henry, apologetically. Then he appealed piteously to Jael, whose power over him struck everybody directly, including Grace Carden. "Look here, you mustn't think, because I don't keep howling, I'm all right. My arm is disabled: my back is almost broken: my thigh is cut. I'm in sharp pain, all this time: and that makes a fellow impatient of being lectured on the back of it all. Why doesn't he let me go? I don't want to affront him now. All I want is to go and get nursed a bit somewhere."

"Now that is the first word of reason and common sense you have uttered, young man. It decides me not to detain you. All I shall do, under the circumstances, is to clear your rubbish out of that holy building, and watch it by night as well as day. Your property, however, shall be collected, and delivered to you uninjured: so oblige me with your name and address."

Henry made no reply.

Raby turned his eye full upon him.

"Surely you do not object to tell me your name."

"I do."

"Why?"

“Excuse me.”

“What are you afraid of? Do you doubt my word, when I tell you I shall not proceed against you?”

“No : it is not that at all. But this is no place for me to utter my father’s name. We all have our secrets, sir. You have got yours. There’s a picture, with its face to the wall. Suppose I was to ask you to tell all the world whose face it is you insult and hide from the world?”

Raby turned red with wrath and surprise, at this sudden thrust. “You insolent young scoundrel!” he cried. “What is that to you, and what connection can there be between that portrait and a man in your way of life?”

“There’s a close connection,” said Henry, trembling with anger, in his turn: “and the proof is that, when that picture is turned to the light, I’ll tell you my name: and, till that picture is turned to the light, I’ll not tell you my name; and if anybody here knows my name, and tells it you, may that person’s tongue be blistered at the root!”

“Oh, how fearful!” cried Grace, turning very pale. “But I’ll put an end to it all. I’ve got the key, and I’ve his permission, and I’ll—oh, Mr. Raby, there’s something more in this than we know.” She darted to the picture, and unlocked the padlock, and, with Jael’s

assistance, began to turn the picture. Then Mr. Raby rose and seemed to bend his mind inwards, but he neither forbade, nor encouraged, this impulsive act of Grace Carden's.

Now there was not a man, nor a woman, in the room, whose curiosity had not been more or less excited about this picture; so there was a general movement towards it, of all but Mr. Raby, who stood quite still, turning his eye inwards, and evidently much moved, though passive.

There happened to be a strong light upon the picture, and as soon as it was turned, the lovely olive face, the vivid features, and glorious black eyes and eyebrows, seemed to flash out of the canvas into life.

Even the living faces, being blondes, paled before it, in the one particular of colour. They seemed fair glittering moons, and this a glowing sun.

Grace's first feelings were those of simple surprise and admiration. But, as she gazed, Henry's words returned to her, and all manner of ideas struck her pell-mell. "Oh, beautiful! beautiful!" she cried. Then, turning to Henry, "You are right; it was not a face to hide from the world—oh! the likeness! just look at *him*, and then at her! can I be mistaken?"

This appeal was made to the company, and roused curiosity to a high pitch; every eye began to compare

the dark-skinned beauty on the wall with the swarthy young man who now stood there, and submitted in haughty silence to the comparison.

The words caught Mr. Raby's attention. He made a start, and elbowing them all out of his way, strode up to the picture.

"What do you say, Miss Carden? What likeness can there be between my sister and a smith?" and he turned and frowned haughtily on Henry Little.

Henry returned his look of defiance directly.

But that very exchange of defiance brought out another likeness, which Grace's quick eye seized directly.

"Why, he is still liker you," she cried. "Look, good people! Look at all three. Look at their great black eyes, and their brown hair. Look at their dark skins, and their haughty noses. Oh, you needn't open your nostrils at me, gentlemen; I am not a bit afraid of either of you.—And then look at this lovely creature. She is a Raby too, only softened down by her sweet womanliness. Look at them all three. If they are not one flesh and blood, I have no eyes."

"Oh yes, Miss; and this lady is his mother. For I have *seen* her; and she is a sweet lady; and she told me I had a Cairnhope face, and kissed me for it."

Upon this from Jael, the general conviction rose into a hum that buzzed round the room.

Mr. Raby was struck with amazement. At last he turned slowly upon Henry, and said, with stiff politeness, "Is your name Little, sir?"

"Little is my name, and I'm proud of it."

"Your name may be Little, but your face is Raby. All the better for you, sir."

He then turned his back to the young man, and walked right in front of the picture, and looked at it steadily and sadly.

It was a simple and natural action, yet somehow done in so imposing a way, that the bystanders held their breath, to see what would follow.

He gazed long and steadily on the picture, and his features worked visibly.

"Ay!" he said. "Nature makes no such faces now-a-days. Poor unfortunate girl!" And his voice faltered a moment.

He then began to utter, in a low grave voice, some things that took everybody by surprise, by the manner as well as the matter; for, with his never once taking his eyes off the picture, and speaking in a voice softened by the sudden presence of that womanly beauty, the companion of his youth, it was just like a man speaking softly in a dream.

"Thomas, this picture will remain as it is while I live."

“ Yes, sir.”

“ I find I can bear the sight of you. As we get older we get tougher. You look as if you didn't want me to quarrel with your son? Well, I will not: there has been quarrelling enough. Any of the loyal Dences here?” But he never even turned his head from the picture to look for them.

“ Only me, sir; Jael Dence, at your service. Father's not very well.”

“ Nathan, or Jael, it is all one, so that it is Dence. You'll take that young gentleman home with you, and send him to bed. He'll want nursing: for he got some ugly blows, and took them like a gentleman. The young gentleman has a fancy for forging things—the Lord knows what. He shall not forge things in a church, and defile the tombs of his own forefathers; but” (with a groan) “ he can forge in your yard. All the snobs in Hillsborough shan't hinder him, if that is his cursed hobby. Gentlemen are not to be dictated to by snobs. Arm three men every night with guns; load the guns with ball, not small shot, as I did; and, if those ruffians molest him again, kill them, and then come to me and complain of them. But, mind you, kill them first—complain afterwards. And now take half-a-dozen of these men with you, to carry him to the farm, if he needs it. THERE, EDITH!”

And still he never moved his eyes from the picture, and the words seemed to drop out of him.

Henry stood bewildered, and, ere he could say anything that might revive the dormant irritation of Mr. Raby against him, female tact interposed. Grace clasped her hands to him, with tears in her eyes; and as for Jael Dence, she assumed the authority with which she had been invested, and hurried him bodily away; and the sword-dancers all gathered round him, and they carried him in triumphant procession, with the fiddler playing, and George whistling the favourite tune of "Raby come home again," while every sturdy foot beat the hard and ringing road in admirable keeping with that spirit-stirring march.

When he was gone, Grace crept up to Mr. Raby, who still stood before the picture, and eyed it, and thought of his youth. She took his arm wondrous softly with her two hands, rested her sweet head against his shoulder, and gazed at it along with him.

When she had nestled to him some time in this delicate attitude, she turned her eyes up to him, and murmured, "How good, how noble you are: and how I love you." Then, all in a moment, she curled round his neck, and kissed him with a tender violence, that took him quite by surprise.

As for Mr. Coventry, he had been reduced to a nullity,

and escaped attention all this time : he sat in gloomy silence, and watched with chilled and foreboding heart the strange turn events had taken, and were taking ; events which he, and no other man, had set rolling.

CHAPTER VI.

FREDERICK COVENTRY, being still unacquainted with the contents of Grace's letter, was now almost desperate. Grace Carden, inaccessible to an unknown workman, would she be inaccessible to a workman, whom Mr. Raby, proud as he was, had publicly recognized as his nephew? This was not to be expected. But something was to be expected, viz., that in a few days the door would be closed with scorn in the face of Frederick Coventry, the miserable traitor, who had broken his solemn pledge, and betrayed his benefactor to those who had all but assassinated him. Little would be sure to suspect him, and the prisoner, when he came to be examined, would furnish some clue.

A cold perspiration bedewed his very back, when he recollected that the chief constable would be present at Cole's examination, and supply the link, even if there should be one missing. He had serious thoughts of leaving the country at once.

Finding himself unobserved, he walked out of the room, and paced up and down the hall.

His thoughts now took a practical form. He must bribe the prisoner to hold his tongue.

But how? and when? and where?

After to-night there might be no opportunity of saying a word to him.

While he was debating this in his mind, Knight the butler crossed the hall.

Coventry stopped him, and asked where the prisoner was.

“Where Squire told us to put him, sir.”

“No chance of his escaping—I hope?”

“Not he, sir.”

“I should like to take a look at him.”

Knight demurred. “Well, sir, you see the orders are—but of course Master won’t mind you. I’ll speak to him.”

“No, it is not worth while. I am only anxious the villain should be secure.” This of course was a feeler.

“Oh, there’s no fear of that. Why, he is in the strong-room. It’s right above yours. If you’ll come with me, sir, I’ll show you the door.”

Coventry accompanied him, and Thomas Knight showed him a strong door, with two enormous bolts outside, both shot.

Coventry felt despair, and affected satisfaction.

Then, after a pause, he said, "But is the window equally secure?"

"Two iron bars, almost as thick as these bolts: and, if it stood open, what could he do but break his neck, and cheat the gallows? He is all right, sir; never you fear. We sarched him, from head to foot, and found no eend o' tools in his pockets. He is a deep'un. But we are Yorkshire too, as the saying is. He goes to Hillsbro' town-hall to-morrow; and glad to be shut on him."

Coventry complimented him, and agreed with him that escape was impossible.

He then got a light, and went to his own bed-room, and sat down, cold at heart, before the fire.

He sat in that state, till two o'clock in the morning, distracting his brain with schemes, that were invented only to be dismissed as idle.

At last an idea came to him. He took his fishing-rod, and put the thinner joints together, and laid them on the bed. He then opened his window very cautiously. But, as that made some noise, he remained quite quiet for full ten minutes. Then he got upon the window-seat, and passed the fishing-rod out. After one or two attempts, he struck the window above with the fine end.

Instantly he heard a movement above, and a window cautiously opened.

He gave a low "Hem!"

"Who's that?" whispered the prisoner, from above.

"A man who wants you to escape."

"Nay; but I have no tools."

"What do you require?"

"I think I could do summut with a screw-driver."

"I'll send you one up."

The next minute a couple of small screw-drivers were passed up—part of the furniture of his gun.

Cole worked hard, but silently, for about an hour, and then he whispered down that he should be able to get a bar out. But how high was it from the ground?"

"About forty feet."

Coventry heard the man actually groan at the intelligence.

"Let yourself down on my window-sill. I can find you rope enough for that."

"What, d'ye take me for a bird, that can light of a gate?"

"But the sill is solid stone, and full a foot wide."

"Say ye so, lad? Then luck is o' my side. Send up rope."

The rope was sent up, and presently was fast to something above, and dangled down a little past the window-sill.

“Put out a light on sill,” whispered the voice above.

“I will.”

Then there was a long silence, during which Coventry’s blood ran cold.

As nothing further occurred, he whispered, “What is the matter?”

“My stomach fails me. Send me up a drop brandy, will ye? Eh, man, but this is queer work.”

“I can’t get it up to you; you must drink it here. Come,—think! It will be five years’ penal servitude if you don’t.”

“Is the rope long enough?”

“Plenty for that.”

Then there was another awful silence.

By-and-by a man’s legs came dangling down, and Cole landed on the sill, still holding tight by the rope. He swung down on the sill, and slid into the room, perspiring and white with fear.

Coventry gave him some brandy directly,—Cole’s trembling hand sent it flying down his throat, and the two men stared at each other.

“Why, it is a gentleman!”

“Yes.”

“ And do you really mean to see me clear ? ”

“ Drink a little more brandy, and recover yourself, and then I'll tell you.”

When the man was fortified and ready for fresh exertions, Coventry told him he must try and slip out of the house at the front door : he would lend him a feather and some oil to apply to the bolts if necessary.

When the plan of operation was settled, Coventry asked him how long it would take him to get to Hillsborough.

“ I can run it in two hours.”

“ Then if I give the alarm in an hour and a half, it won't hurt.”

“ Give me that start and you may send bloodhounds on my heels ; they'll never catch me.”

“ Now take off your shoes.”

While he was taking them off, Cole eyed his unexpected friend very keenly, and took stock of all his features.

When he was ready, Coventry opened his door very carefully, and placed a light so as to be of some use to the fugitive. Cole descended the stairs like a cat, and soon found the heavy bolts and drew them ; then slipped out into the night, and away, with fleet foot and wondering heart, to Hillsborough.

Coventry put out his light and slipped into bed.

About four o'clock in the morning the whole house was alarmed with loud cries, followed by two pistol-shots: and all those who ran out of their bed-rooms at all promptly, found Coventry in his nightgown and trousers, with a smoking pistol in his hand, which he said he had discharged at a robber. The account he gave was, that he had been suddenly awakened by hearing his door shut, and had found his window open: had slipped on his trousers, got to his pistols, and run out just in time to see a man opening the great front door: had fired twice at him, and thought he must have hit him the second time.

On examining the window the rope was found dangling.

Instantly there was a rush to the strong-room.

The bird was flown.

“Ah!” said Coventry. “I felt there ought to be some one with him, but I didn't like to interfere.”

George the groom and another were mounted on swift horses, and took the road to Hillsborough.

But Cole, with his start of a hundred minutes, was safe in a back slum before they got half way.

What puzzled the servants most was how Cole could have unscrewed the bar, and where he could have obtained the cord. And while they were twisting this matter every way, in hot discussion, Coventry quaked,

for he feared his little gunscrews would be discovered. But no, they were not in the room.

It was a great mystery ; but Raby said they ought to have searched the man's body as well as his pockets.

He locked the cord up, however, and remarked it was a new one, and had probably been bought in Hillsborough. He would try and learn where.

At breakfast-time a bullet was found in the door. Coventry apologized.

“ Your mistake was missing the man, not hitting the door,” said Raby. “ One comfort, I tickled the fellow with small shot. It shall be slugs next time. All we can do now is to lay the matter before the police. I must go into Hillsborough, I suppose.”

He went into Hillsborough accordingly, and told the chief constable the whole story, and deposited the piece of cord with him. He found that zealous officer already acquainted with the outline of the business, and on his mettle to discover the authors and agents of the outrage, if possible. And it occurred to his sagacity that there was at this moment a workman in Hillsborough, who must know many secrets of the Trades, and had now nothing to gain by concealing them.

CHAPTER VII.

THUS the attempt to do Little was more successful than it looks. Its object was to keep Little and Simmons apart, and sure enough those two men never met again in life.

But, on the other hand, this new crime embittered two able men against the Union, and put Grotait in immediate peril. Mr. Ransome conferred with Mr. Holdfast, and they both visited Simmons, and urged him to make a clean breast before he left the world.

Simmons hesitated. He said repeatedly, "Gi' me time ! gi' me time !"

Grotait heard of these visits, and was greatly alarmed. He set Dan Tucker and another to watch by turns and report.

Messrs. Holdfast and Ransome had an ally inside the house. Eliza Watney had come in from another town, and had no Hillsborough prejudices. She was furious at this new outrage on Little, who had won her regard, and she hoped her brother-in-law would reveal

all he knew. Such a confession, she thought, might remove the stigma from himself to those better-educated persons, who had made a tool of her poor ignorant relative.

Accordingly, no sooner did the nurse Little had provided inform her, in a low voice, that there was *a change*, than she put on her bonnet, and went in all haste to Mr. Holdfast, and also to the chief constable, as she had promised them to do.

But of course she could not go without talking. She met an acquaintance not far from the door, and told her Ned was near his end, and she was going to tell the gentlemen.

Dan Tucker stepped up to this woman, and she was as open-mouthed to him as Eliza had been to her. Dan went directly with the news to Grotait.

Grotait came all in a hurry, but Holdfast was there before him, and was actually exhorting Simmons to do a good action in his last moments, and reveal those greater culprits who had employed him, when Grotait, ill at ease, walked in, sat down at the foot of the bed, and fixed his eye on Simmons.

Simmons caught sight of him and stared, but said nothing to him. Yet, when Holdfast had done, Simmons was observed to look at Grotait, though he replied to the other. "If you was a Hillsbro' man, you'd know we tell on dead folk, but not on quick. I told on Ned

Simmons, because he was as good as dead: but to tell on Trade, that's different."

"And I think, my poor fellow," suggested Grotait, smoothly, "you might spend your last moments better in telling *us* what you would wish the Trade to do for your wife, and the child, if it lives."

"Well, I think ye might make the old gal an allowance till she marries again."

"Oh, Ned, Ned!" cried the poor woman. "I'll have no man after thee." And a violent burst of grief followed.

"Thou'll do like the rest," said the dying man. "Hold thy belling, and let me speak, that's got no time to lose. How much will yer allow her, old lad?"

"Six shillings a week, Ned."

"And what is to come of young 'un?"

"We'll apprentice him."

"To my trade?"

"You know better than that, Ned. You are a free-man; but he won't be a freeman's son by our law, thou know'st. But there's plenty of outside trades in Hillsbro'. We'll bind him to one of those, and keep an eye on him for thy sake."

"Well, I must take what I can get."

"And little enough too," said Eliza Watney. "Now do you know that they have set upon Mr. Little,

and beaten him within an inch of his life? Oh, Ned, you can't approve that, and him our best friend."

"Who says I approve it, thou fool?"

"Then tell the gentleman who the villain was; for I believe you know."

"I'll tell 'em summut about it."

Grotait turned pale; but still kept his glittering eye fixed on the sick man.

"The job was offered to me; but I wouldn't be in it. I know that much. Says I, 'He has had his squeak.'"

"Who offered you the job?" asked Mr. Holdfast. And at this moment Ransome came in.

"What, another black coat!" said Simmons. "——, if you are not like so many crows over a dead horse." He then began to wander, and Holdfast's question remained unanswered.

This aberration continued so long, and accompanied with such interruptions of the breathing, that both Holdfast and Ransome despaired of ever hearing another rational word from the man's lips.

They lingered on however, and still Grotait sat at the foot of the bed, with his glittering eye fixed on the dying man.

Presently Simmons became silent, and reflected.

"Who offered me the job to do Little?" said he, in a clear rational voice.

“ Yes,” said Mr. Holdfast. “ And who paid you to blow up the forge ? ”

Simmons made no reply. His fast fleeting powers appeared unable now to hold an idea for above a second or two.

Yet, after another short interval, he seemed to go back a second time to the subject as intelligibly as ever.

“ Master Editor ! ” said he, with a sort of start.

“ Yes.” And Holdfast stepped close to his bedside.

“ Can you keep a secret ? ”

Grotait started up.

“ Yes ! ” said Holdfast, eagerly.

“ THEN SO CAN I.”

These were the last words of Ned Simmons. He died, false to himself, but true to his fellows, and faithful to a terrible confederacy, which, in England and the nineteenth century, was Venice and the middle ages over again.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. COVENTRY, relieved of a great and immediate anxiety, could now turn his whole attention to Grace Carden; and she puzzled him. He expected to see her come down beaming with satisfaction at the great event of last night. Instead of that she appeared late, with cheeks rather pale, and signs of trouble under her fair eyes.

As the day wore on, she showed positive distress of mind; irritable and dejected by turns, and quite unable to settle to anything.

Mr. Coventry, with all his skill, was quite at fault. He could understand her being in anxiety for news about Little; but why not relieve her anxiety by sending a servant to inquire? Above all, why this irritation? this positive suffering?

A mystery to him, there is no reason why it should be one to my readers. Grace Carden, for the first time in her life, was in the clutches of a fiend, a torturing fiend, called jealousy.

The thought that another woman was nursing Henry Little all this time distracted her. It would have been such heaven to her to tend him, after those cruel men had hurt him so; but that pure joy was given to another, and that other loved him, and could now indulge and show her love. Show it? Why, she had herself opened his eyes to Jael's love, and advised him to reward it.

And now she could do nothing to defend herself. The very improvement in Henry's circumstances held her back. She could not write to him and say, "Now I know you are Mr. Raby's nephew, that makes all the difference." That would only give him fresh offence, and misrepresent herself; for in truth she had repented her letter long before the relationship was discovered.

No; all she could do was to wait till Jael Dence came up, and then charge her with some subtle message, that might make Henry Little pause if he still loved her.

She detected Coventry watching her. She fled directly to her own room, and there sat on thorns, waiting for her rival to come and give her an opportunity.

But afternoon came, and no Jael; evening came, and no Jael.

"Ah!" thought Grace, bitterly, "she is better

employed than to come near me. She is not a self-sacrificing fool like me. When I had the advantage, I gave it up; now she has got it, she uses it without mercy, decency, or gratitude. And that is the way to love. Oh! if my turn could but come again! But it never will."

Having arrived at this conclusion, she lay on the couch in her own room, and was thoroughly miserable.

She came down to dinner, and managed to take a share in the conversation, but was very languid; and Coventry detected that she had been crying.

After dinner, Knight brought in a verbal message from Jael to Mr. Raby, to the effect that the young gentleman was stiff and sore, and she had sent into Hillsborough for Doctor Amboyne.

"Quite right of her," said the Squire. "You needn't look so alarmed, Grace; there are no bones broken: and he is in capital hands: he couldn't have a tenderer nurse than that great strapping lass, nor a better doctor than my friend and maniac Amboyne."

Next morning, soon after breakfast, Raby addressed his guests as follows:—"I was obliged to go into Hillsborough yesterday, and postpone the purification of that sacred building. But I set a watch on it; and this day I devote to a pious purpose; I'm going to un-Little the church of my forefathers; and you can come with

me, if you choose." This invitation, however, was given in a tone so gloomy, and so little cordial, that Coventry, courtier-like, said in reply, he felt it would be a painful sight to his host, and the fewer witnesses the better. Raby nodded assent, and seemed pleased. Not so Miss Carden. She said: "If that is your feeling, you had better stay at home. *I* shall go. I have something to tell Mr. Raby when we get there; and I'm vain enough to think it will make him not quite so angry about the poor dear old church."

"Then come, by all means," said Raby; "for I'm angry enough at present."

Before they got half way to the church, they were hailed from behind; and, turning round, saw the burly figure of Dr. Amboyne coming after them.

They waited for him, and he came up with them. He had heard the whole business from Little, and was warm in the praises of his patient.

To a dry inquiry from Raby, whether he approved of his patient desecrating a church; he said, with delicious coolness, he thought there was not much harm in that, the church not being used for divine service.

At this, Raby uttered an inarticulate but savage growl; and Grace, to avert a hot discussion, begged the Doctor not to go into that question, but to tell her how Mr. Little was.

“Oh, he has received some severe contusions, but there is nothing serious. He is in good hands, I assure you. I met him out walking with his nurse; and I must say I never saw a handsomer couple. He is dark; she is fair. She is like the ancient statues of Venus, massive and grand, but not clumsy; he is lean and sinewy, as a man ought to be.”

“Oh, Doctor, this from you?” said Grace, with undisguised spite.

“Well, it *was* a concession. He was leaning on her shoulder, and her face and downcast eyes were turned towards him so sweetly—said I to myself—Hum!”

“What!” said Raby. “Would you marry him to a farmer’s daughter?”

“No; I’d let him marry who he likes: only, having seen him and his nurse together, it struck me that, between two such fine creatures of the same age, the tender relation of patient and nurse, sanctioned, as I hear it is, by a benevolent uncle——”

“Confound your impudence!”

“——Would hardly stop there. What do you think, Miss Carden?”

“I’ll tell you, if you will promise, on your honour, never to repeat what I say.” And she slackened her pace, and lingered behind Mr. Raby.

He promised her.

“Then,” she whispered in his ear, “I HATE YOU!

And her eyes flashed blue fire at him, and startled him.

Then she darted forward, and took Mr. Raby’s arm, with a scarlet face, and a piteous deprecating glance shot back at the sagacious personage she had defied.

Dr. Amboyne proceeded instantly to put himself in this young lady’s place, and so divine what was the matter. The familiar process soon brought a knowing smile to his sly lip.

They entered the church, and went straight to the forge.

Raby stood with folded arms, and contemplated the various acts of sacrilege with a silent distress that was really touching.

Amboyne took more interest in the traces of the combat. “Ah!” said he, this is where he threw the hot coals in their faces—he has told me all about it. And look at this pool of blood on the floor! Here he felled one of them with his shovel. What is this?—traces of blood leading up to this chest!”

He opened the chest, and found plain proofs inside that the wounded man had hid himself in it for some time. He pointed this out to Raby; and gave it as his opinion that the man’s confederates had come back for

him, and carried him away. "These fellows are very true to one another. I have often admired them for that."

Raby examined the blood-stained interior of the chest, and could not help agreeing with the sagacious doctor.

"Yes," said he, sadly; "if we had been sharp, we might have caught the blackguard. But I was in a hurry to leave the scene of sacrilege. Look here; the tomb of a good knight defiled into an oven, and the pews mutilated—and all for the base uses of trade." And in this strain he continued for a long time so eloquently that, at last, he roused Grace Carden's ire.

"Mr. Raby," said she, firmly, "please to add to those base uses one more. One dismal night two poor creatures, a man and a woman, lost their way in the snow; and, after many a hard struggle, the cold and the snow overpowered them, and death was upon them. But, just at her last gasp, the girl saw a light, and heard the tinkling of a hammer. She tottered towards it; and it was a church. She just managed to strike the door with her benumbed hands, and then fell insensible. When she came to herself, gentle hands had laid her before two glorious fires in that cold tomb there. Then the same gentle hands gave her food and wine, and words of comfort, and did everything for her

that brave men do for poor weak suffering women. Yes, sir, it was my life he saved, and Mr. Coventry's too; and I can't bear to hear a word against him, especially while I stand looking at his poor forge, and his grates, that you abuse; but I adore them, and bless them; and so would you, if they had saved your life, as they did mine. You don't love me one bit: and it is very cruel."

Raby stood astonished and silent. At last he said, in a very altered tone, quite mild and deprecating, "Why did you not tell me this before?"

"Because he made us promise not. Would you have had me betray my benefactor?"

"No. You are a brave girl, an honest girl. I love you more than a bit, and, for your sake, I forgive him the whole thing. I will never call it sacrilege again, since its effect was to save an angel's life. Come, now, you have shown a proper spirit, and stood up for the absent, and brought me to submission by your impetuosity, so don't spoil it all by crying."

"No, I won't," said Grace, with a gulp. But her tears would not cease all in a moment. She had evoked that tender scene, in which words and tears of true and passionate love had rained upon her. They were an era in her life; had swept for ever out of her heart all the puny voices that had prattled what they called love to her; and that divine music, should she ever hear it

again? She had resigned it, had bade it shine upon another. For this, in reality, her tears were trickling.

Mr. Raby took a much lighter view of it, and, to divert attention from her, he said, "Hallo! why this inscription has become legible. It used to be only legible in parts. Is that his doing?"

"Not a doubt of it," said Amboyne. "Set that against his sacrilege."

"Miss Carden and I are both agreed it was not sacrilege. What is here in this pew? A brass! Why, this is the brass we could none of us decipher. Hang me, if he has not read it, and restored it!"

"So he has. And where's the wonder? We live in a glorious age" (Raby smiled) "that has read the written mountains of the East, and the Abyssinian monuments: and he is a man of the age, and your mediæval brasses are no more to him than cuneiform letters to Rawlinson. Let me read this resuscitated record. 'Edith Little, daughter of Robert Raby, by Leah Dence his wife:' why here's a hodge-podge! What! have the noble Rabys intermarried with the humble Dences?"

"So it seems. A younger son."

"And a Raby, daughter of Dence, married a Little three hundred years ago?"

"So it seems."

“Then what a pity this brass was not deciphered thirty years ago. But never mind that. All I demand is tardy justice to my protégé. Is not this a remarkable man? By day he carves wood, and carries out a philanthropic scheme (which I mean to communicate to you this very day, together with this young man’s report); at night he forges tools that all Hillsborough can’t rival; in an interval of his work he saves a valuable life or two; in another odd moment he fights like a lion, one to four; even in his moments of downright leisure, when he is neither saving life nor taking it, he practises honourable arts, restores the fading letters of a charitable bequest, and deciphers brasses, and vastly improves his uncle’s genealogical knowledge, who, nevertheless, passed for an authority, till my Crichton stepped upon the scene.”

Raby bore all this admirably. “You may add,” said he, “that he nevertheless finds time to correspond with his friends. Here is a letter, addressed to Miss Carden, I declare!”

“A letter to me!” said Grace, faintly.

Raby handed it over the pew to her, and turned the address, so that she could judge for herself.

She took it very slowly and feebly, and her colour came and went.

“You seem surprised; and so am I. It must have been written two days ago.”

“Yes.”

“Why, what on earth could he have to say to you?”

“I suppose it is the reply to mine,” stammered Grace.

Mr. Raby looked amazement, and something more.

Grace faltered out an explanation. “When he had saved my life, I was so grateful I wanted to make him a return. I believed Jael Dence and he—I have so high an opinion of her—I ventured to give him a hint that he might find happiness there.”

Raby bit his lip. “A most singular interference on the part of a young lady,” said he stiffly. “You are right, Doctor; this age resembles no other. I suppose you meant it kindly; but I am very sorry you felt called upon, at your age, to put any such idea into the young man’s head.”

“So am I,” said poor Grace. “Oh, pray forgive me. I am so unhappy.” And she hid her face in her hands.

“Of course I forgive you,” said Raby. “But, unfortunately, I knew nothing of all this, and went and put him under her charge; and here he has found a precedent for marrying a Dence—found it on this confounded brass! Well, no matter. Life is one long

disappointment. What does he say? Where is the letter gone to? It has vanished."

"I have got it safe," said Grace, deprecatingly.

"Then please let me know what he says."

"What, read his letter to you?"

"Why not, pray? I'm his uncle. He is my heir-at-law. I agree with Amboyne, he has some fine qualities. It is foolish of me, no doubt, but I am very anxious to know what he says about marrying my tenant's daughter." Then, with amazing dignity, "Can I be mistaken in thinking I have a right to know who my nephew intends to marry?" And he began to get very red.

Grace hung her head, and, trembling a little, drew the letter very slowly out of her bosom.

It just flashed through her mind how cruel it was to make her read out the death-warrant of her heart before two men; but she summoned all a woman's fortitude and self-defence, prepared to hide her anguish under a marble demeanour, and quietly opened the letter.

CHAPTER IX.

“ You advise me to marry one, when I love another : and this, you think, is the way to be happy. It has seldom proved so, and I should despise happiness, if I could only get it in that way.

“ Yours, sadly but devotedly,

“ H. LITTLE.

“ Will you wait two years ?”

Grace, being on her defence, read this letter very slowly, and, as if she had to decipher it. That gave her time to say, “ Yours, etcetera,” instead of “ sadly and devotedly.” (Why be needlessly precise ?) As for the postscript, she didn’t trouble them with that at all.

She then hurried the letter into her pocket, that it might not be asked for, and said, with all the non-chalance she could manage to assume, “ Oh, if he loves somebody else !”

“ No ; that is worse still,” said Mr. Raby. “ In his own rank of life, it is ten to one if he finds anything as

modest, as good, and as loyal as Dence's daughter. It's some factory-girl, I suppose."

"Let us hope not," said Grace, demurely; but Amboyne noticed that her cheek was now flushed, and her eyes sparkling like diamonds.

Soon afterwards she strolled apart, and took a wonderful interest in the monuments and things, until she found an opportunity to slip out into the churchyard. There she took the letter out, and kissed it again and again, as if she would devour it; and all the way home she was as gay as a lark. Amboyne put himself in her place.

When they got home, he said to her, "My dear Miss Carden, I have a favour to ask you. I want an hour's conversation with Mr. Raby. Will you be so very kind as to see that I am not interrupted?"

"Oh yes. No; you must tell me first, what you are going to talk about. I can't have gentlemen talking nonsense together, *uninterruptedly*."

"You ladies claim to monopolize nonsense, eh? Well, I am going to talk about my friend, Mr. Little. Is he nonsense?"

"That depends. What are you going to say about him?"

"Going to advance his interests—and my own hobby. Such is man."

“ Never mind what is man ; what is your hobby ? ”

“ Saving idiotic ruffians’ lives.”

“ Well, that *is* a hobby. But, if Mr. Little is to profit by it, never mind ; you shall not be interrupted, if I can keep ‘ les facheux ’ away.”

Accordingly she got her work, and sat in the hall. Here, as she expected, she was soon joined by Mr. Coventry, and he found her in a gracious mood, and in excellent spirits.

After some very pleasant conversation, she told him she was keeping sentinel over Dr. Amboyne and his hobby.

“ What is that ? ”

“ Saving idiotic ruffians’ lives. Ha ! ha ! ha ! ”

Her merry laugh rang through the hall like a peal of bells.

Coventry stared, and then gave up trying to understand her and her eternal changes. He just set himself to please her, and he never found it easier than that afternoon.

Meantime Dr. Amboyne got Raby alone, and begged leave, in the first place, to premise that his (Raby’s) nephew was a remarkable man. To prove it, he related Little’s whole battle with the Hillsborough trades ; and then produced a Report the young man had handed him that very day. It was actually in his pocket

during the fight, mute protest against that barbarous act.

The Report was entitled—

“LIFE, LABOUR, AND CAPITAL IN HILLSBOROUGH.”

And was divided into two parts.

Part 1 was entitled—

“PECULIARITIES OF CUTLERY HURTFUL TO LIFE AND
HEALTH.”

And Part 2 was entitled—

“THE REMEDIES TO THE ABOVE.”

Part 2 was divided thus :—

- A. What the masters could do.
- B. What the workmen could do.
- C. What the Legislature could do.

Part 1 dealt first with the diseases of the grinders ; but, instead of quoting it, I ask leave to refer to vol. i. chapter 9, where the main facts lie recorded.

Having thus curtailed the Report, I print the

remainder in an Appendix (vol. iii. p. 327) for the use of those few readers who can endure useful knowledge in works of this class.

Raby read the Report without moving a muscle.

“Well, what do you think of him?” asked Amboyne.

“I think he is a fool to trouble his head whether these animals live or die.”

“Oh, that is my folly; not his. At bottom, he cares no more than you do.”

“Then I retract my observation.”

“As to its being folly, or as to Little being the fool?”

“Whichever you like best.”

“Thank you. Well, but to be serious, this young man is very anxious to be a master, instead of a man. What do you say? Will you help his ambition, and my sacred hobby?”

“What, plunge you deeper in folly, and him in trade? Not I. I don't approve folly; I hate trade. But I tell you what I'll do. If he and his mother can see my conduct in its proper light, and say so, they can come to Raby, and he can turn gentleman, take the name of Raby, as he has got the face, and be my heir.”

“Are you serious, Raby?”

“Perfectly.”

“Then you had better write it, and I’ll take it to him.”

“Certainly.” He sat down and wrote as follows:—

“SIR,—What has recently occurred appears calculated to soften one of those animosities which, between persons allied in blood, are always to be regretted. I take the opportunity to say, that if your mother, under your advice, will now reconsider the duties of a trustee, and my conduct in that character, and her remarks on that conduct, I think she will do me justice, and honour me once more with her esteem. Should this be the result, I further hope that she and yourself will come to Raby, and that you will change that way of life, which you have found so full of thorns, and prepare yourself to succeed to my name and place.

“I am, your obedient servant,

“GUY RABY.”

“There, read that.”

Amboyne read it, and approved it. Then he gave a sigh, and said, “And so down goes my poor hobby.”

“Oh, never mind,” said Raby; “you’ve got one or two left in your stable.”

Doctor Amboyne went out, and passed through the

hall. There he found Mr. Coventry and Miss Carden : the latter asked him, rather keenly, if the conference was over.

“ Yes, and not without a result : I’ll read it to you.” He did so, and Grace’s cheek was dyed with blushes, and her eyes beamed with joy.

“ Oh, how noble he is, and how good you are. Run ! Fly !”

“ Such movements are undignified, and unsuited to my figure. Shall I roll down the hill ? That would be my quickest way.”

This discussion was cut short by a servant, who came to tell the Doctor that a carriage was ordered for him, and would be round in a minute.

Doctor Amboyne drove off, and Miss Carden now avoided Coventry : she retired to her room. But, it seems, she was on the watch ; for, on the Doctor’s return, she was the person who met him in the hall.

“ Well ?” said she, eagerly.

“ Well, would you believe it ? he declines. He objects to leave his way of life, and to wait for dead men’s shoes.”

“ Oh, Doctor Amboyne ! And you were there to advise him !”

“ I did not venture to advise him. There was so much to be said on both sides.” Then he went off to

Raby, with the note; but, as he went, he heard Grace say, in a low voice, "Ah, you never thought of me."

Little's note ran thus:—

"SIR,—I thank you for your proposal, and, as to the first part of it, I quite agree, and should be glad to see my mother and you friends again. But, as to my way of life, I have chosen my path, and mean to stick to it. I hope soon to be a master, instead of a workman; and I shall try and behave like a gentleman, so that you may not have to blush for me. Should blush for myself if I were to give up industry, and independence, and take to waiting for dead men's shoes; that is a baser occupation than any trade in Hillsborough, I think. This is not as politely written as I could wish; but I am a blunt fellow, and I hope you will excuse it. I am not ungrateful to you for shooting those vermin, nor for your offer, though I cannot accept it.

"Yours respectfully,

"HENRY LITTLE."

Raby read this, and turned white with rage.

He locked the letter up along with poor Mrs. Little's letters, and merely said, "I have only one request to make. Never mention the name of Little to me again."

Doctor Amboyne went home very thoughtful.

That same day Mr. Carden wrote from London to his daughter, informing her that he should be at Hillsborough next day to dinner. She got the letter next morning, and showed it to Mr. Raby. He ordered his carriage after breakfast for Hillsborough.

This was a blow to Grace. She had been hoping all this time a fair opportunity might occur for saying something to young Little.

She longed to write to him, and set his heart, and her own, at rest. But a great shyness and timidity paralysed her, and she gave up the idea of writing, and had hitherto been hoping they might meet, and she might reinstate herself by some one cunning word. And now the end of it all was, that she was driven away from Raby Hall without doing anything but wish, and sigh, and resolve, and give up her resolutions with a blush.

The carriage passed the farm on its way to Hillsborough. This was Grace's last chance.

Little was standing at the porch.

A thrill of delight traversed Grace's bosom.

It was followed, however, by a keen pang. Jael Dence sat beside him, sewing: and Grace saw, in a moment, she was sewing complacently. It was more than Grace could bear. She pulled the check-string, and the carriage stopped.

CHAPTER X.

HENRY LITTLE, at this moment, was in very low spirits. His forge was in the yard, and a faithful body-guard at his service : but his right arm was in a sling, and so he was brought to a stand-still ; and Coventry was with Grace at the house ; and he, like her, was tortured with jealousies ; and neither knew what the other suffered.

But everything vanished in a flood of joy, when the carriage stopped, and that enchanting face looked out at him, covered with blushes, that told him he could not be indifferent to her.

“ Oh, Mr. Little, are you better ? ”

“ I’m all right. But, you see, I can’t work. ”

“ Ah, poor arm ! But why should you work ? Why not accept Mr. Raby’s offer ? How proud you are ! ”

“ Should you have thought any better of me, if I had ? ”

“ No. I don’t want you altered. It would spoil you. You will come and see us at Woodbine Villa ? Only think how many things we have to talk of now. ”

“ May I ? ”

“ Why of course. ”

“ And will you wait two years for me ? ”

“ Two years ! ” (blushing like a rose.) “ Why I hope it will not be two days, before you come and see us. ”

“ Ah, you mock me. ”

“ No ; no. But suppose you should take the advice I gave you in my mad letter ? ”

“ There’s no fear of that. ”

“ Are you sure ? ” (with a glance at Jael.)

“ Quite sure. ”

“ Then — Good-by. Please drive on. ”

She wouldn’t answer his question ; but her blushes and her radiant satisfaction, and her modest but eloquent looks of love, fully compensated her silence on that head, and the carriage left him standing there, a figure of rapture.

Next day Dr. Amboyne rode up to the farm with a long envelope, and waved it over his head in triumph. It contained a communication from the secretary of the Philanthropic Society. The committee were much struck with Mr. Little’s report, but feared that no manufacturer would act on his suggestions. They were willing to advance 500*l.* towards setting Mr. Little himself up as a manufacturer, if he would bind himself to adopt and carry out the improvements suggested in his

report. The loan to bear no interest, and the return of the capital to depend upon the success of the scheme. Dr. Amboyne, for the society, to have the right of inspecting Mr. Little's books, if any doubt should arise on that head. An agreement was enclosed, and this was more full, particular, and stringent in form than the above, but the purport substantially the same.

Little could not believe his good fortune at first. But there was no disbelieving it; the terms were so cold, precise, and business-like.

"Ah, Doctor," said he, "you have made a man of me; for this is your doing, I know."

"Of course I used my influence. I was stimulated by two spurs, friendship and my hobby. Now shake hands over it, and no fine speeches, but tell me when you can begin. 'My soul's in arms, and eager for the fray.'"

"Begin? Why as soon as I get the money."

"That will come down directly, if I telegraph that you accept the terms. Call in a witness, and sign the agreement."

Jael Dence was called in, and the agreement signed and witnessed, and away went the Doctor in high spirits, after making an appointment with Henry in Hillsborough for the next day.

Henry and Jael Dence talked eagerly over his new

prospects. But though they were great friends, there was nothing to excite Grace's jealousy. No sooner was Little proved to be Raby's nephew than Jael Dence, in her humility, shrank back, and was inwardly ashamed of herself. She became respectful as well as kind; called him "the young master" behind his back, and tried to call him "Sir" to his face, only he would not let her.

Next day Little went to his mother and told her all. She was deeply interested, but bitterly disappointed at Henry's refusal of Raby's offer. "He will never forgive us now," she said. "And oh, Henry, if you love Grace Carden, that was the way to marry her." This staggered him; but he said he had every reason to hope she would marry him without his sacrificing his independence, and waiting with his hands in his pockets for dead men's shoes.

Then he went to Dr. Amboyne, and there were the five hundred pounds waiting for him; but, never having possessed such a sum before, he begged the Doctor to give him only 100*l.* at a time. To finish for the present with this branch of the story, he was lucky enough to make an excellent bargain, bought the plant and stock of a small master-grinder recently deceased. He then confined the grinding to saws and razors; and this enabled him to set up his own forge on the premises,

and to employ a few file-cutters. It was all he could do at starting. Then came the important question, What would the Trades say? He was not long in suspense; Grotait called on him, expressed his regret at the attack that had been made on him, and his satisfaction that now the matter could be happily arranged. "This," said he, "is the very proposal I was going to make to you, (but you wouldn't hear me,) to set up as a small master, and sell your carving-tools to London instead of Hillsbro.'"

"What? will that make me right with the Trade?"

"Pretty near. We protect the workmen from unfair competition, not the masters. However, if you wish to cure the sore altogether, let your own hands grind the tools, and send them out to be handled by Parkin: he has got men on the Box; trade is dull."

"Well, I don't object to that."

"Then, I say, let by-gones be gone-byes."

They shook hands over this, and in a very few hours it was known that Mr. Little was right with the Trade.

His early experiences as a philanthropic master were rather curious; but I shall ask leave to relate them in a series of their own, and to deal at present with matters of more common interest.

He called twice on Grace Carden; but she was out. The third time he found her at home; but there was a

lady with her, talking about the ball Mr. and Miss Carden were about to give. It was a subject calculated to excite volubility, and Henry could not get in a word edgeways. But he received some kind glances that made his heart beat.

The young lady sat there and gabbled ; for she felt sure that no topic imported by a male creature could compete in interest with " the ball." So, at last, Henry rose in despair. But Grace, to whom her own ball had been a bore for the last half-hour, went with him to the door ; and he seized the opportunity to tell her he was a workman no longer, but a master, having workmen under him.

Grace saw he was jubilant, so she was glad directly, and said so.

But then she shook her pretty head, and hoped he would not have to regret Mr. Raby's offer.

" Never," said he, firmly ; " unless I lose you. Now I'm a master, instead of a man, won't you wait two years for me ?"

" No," said Grace, archly. Then, with a look that sent him to heaven, " Not two, but *twenty*, sooner than you should be unhappy, after all you and I—— "

The sentence was never completed. She clapped one hand swiftly before her scarlet face, and ran away to hide, and think of what she had done. It was full five

minutes before she would bring her face under the eye of that young gossip in the drawing-room.

As for Henry, he received the blow full in his heart, and it quite staggered him. He couldn't believe it at first; but when he realized it, waves and waves of joy seemed to rise inside him, and he went off in such a rapture he hardly trod the earth.

He went home, and kissed his mother, and told her, and she sympathized with him perforce, though she was jealous at bottom, poor thing.

The next day Grace received an unexpected visitor—Jael Dence.

Grace stared at sight of her, and received her very coldly.

“Oh, Miss,” said Jael, “don't look so at me that love you dearly;” and with this threw her arms round her neck, and kissed her.

Grace was moved by this; but felt uncomfortable, and even struggled a little, but in vain. Jael was gentle, but mighty. “It's about your letter, Miss.”

“Then let me go,” cried Grace. “I wish I had never written it.”

“Nay; don't say so. I should never have known how good you are.”

“What a fool I am, you mean. How dare you read my letter? Oh! did he show it you? That was very cruel, if he did.”

“No, Miss, he never showed it me; and I never read it. I call it mean to read another body’s letter. But, you know, tisn’t every woman thinks so; and a poor lass that is very fond of me—and I scolded her bitterly—she took the letter out of his pocket, and told me what was in it.”

“Very well then,” said Grace, coldly, “it is right you should also read his answer. I’ll bring it you.”

“Not to-day, Miss, if you please. There is no need. I know him: he is too much of a man to marry one girl when he loves another; and ’tis you he loves, and I hope you will be happy together.”

A few quiet tears followed these brave words, and Grace looked at her askant, and began to do her justice.

“Ah!” said she, with a twinge of jealousy, “you know him better than I. You have answered for him, in his very words. Yet you can’t love him as I do. I hope you are not come to ask me to give him up again, for I can’t.” Then she said, with quick defiance, “Take him from me if you can.” Then, piteously, “And if you do, you will kill me.”

“Dear heart, I came of no such errand. I came to tell you I know how generous you have been to me, and

made me your friend till death ; and, when a Dence says that, she means it. I have been a little imprudent : but not so very. First word I said to him, in this very house, was, ‘ Are you really a workman ? ’ I had the sense to put that question ; for, the first moment I clapped eyes on him, I saw my danger like. Well, he might have answered me true : but you see he didn’t. I think I am not so much to blame. Well, he is the young Squire now, and no mate for me ; and he loves you, that are of his own sort. That is sure to cure me—after a while. Simple folk like me aren’t used to get their way, like the gentry. It takes a deal of patience to go through the world. If you think I’ll let my heart cling to another woman’s sweetheart—nay, but I’d tear it out of my breast first. Yes, I dare say it will be a year or two before I can listen to another man’s voice without hating him for wooing of me ; but Time cures all that don’t fight against the cure. And *you’ll* love me a little, Miss, now, won’t you ? You used to do, before I deserved it half as well as I do to-day.”

“ Of course I shall love you, my poor Jael. But what is my love, compared with that you are now giving up so nobly ? ”

“ It is not much,” said Jael, frankly ; “ but ‘ a little breaks a high fall.’ And I’m one that can only enjoy

my own. Better a penny roll with a clear conscience, than my neighbour's loaf. I'd liever take your love, and deserve it, than try to steal his."

All this time Grace was silently watching her, to see if there was any deceit, or self-deceit, in all this: and, had there been, it could not have escaped so keen and jealous an eye. But no, the limpid eye, the modest, sober voice, that trembled now and then, but always recovered its resolution, repelled doubt or suspicion.

Grace started to her feet, and said, with great enthusiasm, "I give you the love and respect you deserve so well; and I thank God for creating such a character now and then—to embellish this vile world."

Then she flung herself upon Jael, with wonderful abandon and grace, and kissed her so eagerly that she made poor Jael's tears flow very fast indeed.

She would not let her go back to Cairnhope.

Henry remembered about the ball, and made up his mind to go and stand in the road: he might catch a glimpse of her somehow. He told his mother he should not be home to supper; and, to get rid of the time before the ball, he went to the theatre: thence, at ten o'clock, to "Woodbine Villa," and soon found himself one of a motley group. Men, women, and children

were there to see the company arrive : and as, amongst working-people, the idle and the curious are seldom well-to-do, they were rather a scurvy lot, and each satin or muslin belle, brave with flowers, and sparkling with gems, had to pass through a little avenue of human beings in soiled fustian, dislocated bonnets, rags, and unwashed faces.

Henry got away from this class of spectators, and took up his station right across the road. He leaned against the lamp-post, and watched the drawing-room windows for Grace.

The windows were large, and, being French, came down to the balcony. Little saw many a lady's head and white shoulders, but not the one he sought.

Presently a bed-room window was opened, and a fair face looked out into the night for a moment. It was Jael Dence.

She had assisted Miss Carden to dress, and had then, at her request, prepared the room, and decked it with flowers, to receive a few of the young lady's more favoured friends. This done, she opened the window, and Henry Little saw her.

Nor was it long before she saw him ; for the light of the lamp was full on him.

But he was now looking intently in at the drawing-room windows, and with a ghastly expression.

The fact is, that in the short interval between his seeing Jael and her seeing him, the quadrilles had been succeeded by a waltz, and Grace Carden's head and shoulders were now flitting, at intervals, past the window in close proximity to the head of her partner. What with her snowy, glossy shoulders, her lovely face, and her exquisite head and brow encircled with a coronet of pearls, her beauty seemed half regal, half angelic; yet that very beauty, after the first thrill of joy which the sudden appearance of a beloved one always causes, was now passing cold iron through her lover's heart. For why? A man's arm was round that supple waist, a man's hand held that delicate palm, a man's head seemed wedded to that lovely head, so close were the two together. And the encircling arm, the pressing hand, the head that came and went, and rose and sank, with hers, like twin cherries on a stalk, were the arm, the hand, and the head, of Mr. Frederick Coventry.

Every time those two heads flitted past the window together, they inflicted a spasm of agony on Henry Little, and, between the spasms, his thoughts were bitter beyond expression. An icy barrier still between them, and none between his rival and her! Coventry could dance voluptuously with her before all the world; but he could only stand at the door of that Paradise, and groan and sicken with jealous anguish at the sight.

Now and then he looked up, and saw Jael Dence. She was alone. Like him, she was excluded from that brilliant crowd. He and she were born to work; these butterflies on the first floor, to enjoy.

Their eyes met; he saw soft pity in hers. He cast a mute, but touching, appeal. She nodded, and withdrew from the window. Then he knew the faithful girl would try and do something or other for him.

But he never moved from his pillar of torture. Jealous agony is the one torment men cannot fly from; it fascinates, it holds, it maddens.

Jael came to the drawing-room door just as the waltz ended, and tried to get to Miss Carden; but there were too many ladies and gentlemen, especially about the door.

At last she caught Grace's eye, but only for a moment; and the young lady was in the very act of going out on the balcony for air, with her partner.

She did go out, accompanied by Mr. Coventry, and took two or three turns. Her cheek was flushed, her eye kindled, and the poor jealous wretch over the way saw it, and ascribed all that to the company of his rival.

While she walked to and fro with fawn-like grace, conversing with Mr. Coventry, yet secretly wondering what that strange look Jael had given her could mean, Henry leaned, sick at heart, against the lamp-post over

the way; and, at last, a groan forced its way out of him.

Faint as the sound was, Grace's quick ear caught it, and she turned her head. She saw him directly, and blushed high, and turned pale, all in a moment; for, in that single moment, her swift woman's heart told her why he was so ghastly, and why that sigh of distress.

She stopped short in her walk, and began to quiver from head to foot.

But, after a few moments of alarm, distress, and perplexity, love and high spirit supplied the place of tact, and she did the best and most characteristic thing she could. Just as Mr. Coventry, who had observed her shiver, was asking her if she found it too cold, she drew herself up to her full height, and, turning round, kissed her hand over the balcony to Henry Little, with a sort of princely grandeur, and an ardour of recognition and esteem that set his heart leaping, and his pale cheek blushing, and made Coventry jealous in his turn. Yes, one eloquent gesture did that in a moment.

But the brave girl was too sensitive to prolong such a situation: the music recommenced at that moment, and she seized the opportunity, and retired to the room; she curtsied to Little at the window, and this time he had the sense to lift his hat to her.

The moment she entered the room, Grace Carden

slipped away from Mr. Coventry, and wined her way like a serpent, through the crowd, and found Jael Dence at the door. She caught her by the arm, and pinched her. She was all trembling. Jael drew her up the stairs a little way.

“ You have seen him out there ? ”

“ Yes : and I——Oh ! ”

“ There ! there ! Think of the folk. Fight it down.”

“ I will. Go to him, and say I can't bear it. Him, to stand there——while those I don't care a pin for—— Oh, Jael, for pity's sake, get him home to his mother.”

“ There, don't you fret. I know what to say.”

Jael went down ; borrowed the first shawl she could lay her hand on ; hooded herself with it, and was across the road in a moment.

“ You are to go home directly.”

“ Who says so ? ”

“ She does.”

“ What, does she tell me to go away, and leave her to *him* ? ”

“ What does that matter ? her heart goes with you.”

“ No, no.”

“ Won't you take my word for it ? I'm not given to lying.”

“ I know that. Oh, Jael, sweet, pretty, good-hearted

Jael, have pity on me, and tell me the truth: is it me she loves, or that Coventry?"

"It is you."

"Oh, bless you! bless you! Ah, if I could only be sure of that, what wouldn't I do for her? But, if she loves me, why, why send me away? It is very cruel that so many should be in the same room with her, and *he* should dance with her, and I must not even look on, and catch a glimpse of her now and then. I won't go home."

"Ah!" said Jael, "you are like all the young men: you think only of yourself. And you call yourself a scholar of the good Doctor's."

"And so I am."

"Then why don't you go by his rule, and put yourself in a body's place? Suppose you was in her place, master of this house like, and dancing with a pack of girls you didn't care for, and *she* stood out here, pale, and sighing; and suppose things were so, that you couldn't come out to her, nor she come in to you, wouldn't it cut you to the heart to see her stand in the street and look so unhappy—poor lad? Be good, now, and go home to thy mother. Why stand here and poison the poor young lady's pleasure—such as 'tis—and torment thyself." Jael's own eyes filled, and that proof of sympathy inclined Henry all the more to listen

to her reason. "You are wise, and good, and kind," he said. "But oh, Jael, I adore her so, I'd rather be in hell with her than in heaven without her. Half a loaf is better than no bread. I can't go home and turn my back on the place where she is. Yes, I'm in torments; but I see her. They can't rob my *eyes* of her."

"To oblige *her*!"

"Yes; I'll do anything to oblige *her*. If I could only believe she loves me."

"Put it to the proof, if you don't believe me."

"I will. Tell her I'd much rather stay all night, and catch a glimpse of her now and then; but yet, tell her I'll go home, if she will promise me not to dance with that Coventry again."

"There is a condition!" said Jael.

"It is a fair one," said Henry, doggedly, "and I won't go from it."

Jael looked at him, and saw it was no use arguing the matter. So she went in to the house with his ultimatum.

She soon returned, and told him that Miss Grace, instead of being angry, as she expected, had smiled and looked pleased, and promised not to dance with Mr. Coventry nor anybody else any more that night, "if he would go straight home and consult his beautiful mother." "Those were her words," said the loyal

Dence. "She did say them twice over to make sure."

"God bless her!" cried Henry, warmly; "and bless you, too, my best friend. I'll go this moment."

He cast a long, lingering look at the window, and went slowly down the street.

When he got home, his mother was still up and secretly anxious.

He sat down beside her, and told her where he had been and how it had all ended. "I'm to consult my beautiful mother," said he, kissing her.

"What, does she think I am like my picture now?"

"I suppose so. And you are as beautiful as ever in my eyes, mother. And I do consult you."

Mrs. Little's black eyes flashed; but she said, calmly,—

"What about, dearest?"

"I really don't know. I suppose it was about what happened to-night. Perhaps about it all."

Mrs. Little leaned her head upon her hand and thought.

After a moment's reflection, she said to Henry, rather coldly, "If she is not a very good girl, she must be a very clever one."

"She is both," said Henry, warmly.

“Of that *I* shall be the best judge,” said Mrs. Little, very coldly indeed.

Poor Henry felt quite chilled. He said no more; nor did his mother return to the subject till they parted for the night, and then it was only to ask him what church Miss Carden went to—a question that seemed to be rather frivolous, but he said he thought St. Margaret’s.

Next Sunday evening, Mrs. Little and he being at tea together, she said to him quietly,—“Well, Harry, I have seen her.”

“Oh, mother! where?”

“At St. Margaret’s Church.”

“But how did you know her? By her beauty?”

Mrs. Little smiled, and took a roll of paper out of her muff, that lay on the sofa. She unfolded it, and displayed a drawing. It represented Grace Carden in her bonnet, and was a very good likeness.

The lover pounced on it, and devoured it with astonishment and delight.

“Taken from the bust, and retouched from nature,” said Mrs. Little. “Yes, dear, I went to St. Margaret’s, and asked a pew-opener where she sat. I placed myself where I could command her features; and, you may be sure, I read her very closely. Well, dear, she bears examination. It is a bright face, a handsome

face, and a good face : and almost as much in love as you are."

"What makes you fancy that? Oh, you spoke to her?"

"Certainly not. But I observed her. Restless and listless by turns—her body in one place, her mind in another. She was so taken up with her own thoughts she could not follow the service. I saw the poor girl try very hard several times, but at last she gave it up in despair. Sometimes she knitted her brow; and a young girl seldom does that unless she is thwarted in her love. And I'll tell you a surer sign still: sometimes tears came for no visible reason, and stood in her eyes. She *is* in love; and it cannot be with Mr. Coventry of Bollinghope: for, if she loved him, she would have nothing to brood on but her wedding-dress; and they never knit their brows, nor bedew their eyes, thinking of that; that's a smiling subject. No, it is true love on both sides, I do believe; and that makes my woman's heart yearn. Harry, dear, I'll make you a confession. You have heard that a mother's love is purer and more unselfish than any other love: and so it is. But even mothers are not quite angels always. Sometimes they are just a little jealous: not, I think, where they are blessed with many children; but you are my one child, my playmate, my companion, my friend, my only love.

That sweet girl has come, and I must be dethroned. I felt this, and — no, nothing could ever make me downright thwart your happiness; but a mother's jealousy made me passive, where I might have assisted you if I had been all a mother should be."

"No, no, mother; I am the one to blame. You see, it looked so hopeless at first, I used to be ashamed to talk freely to you. It's only of late I have opened my heart to you as I ought."

"Well, dear, I am glad you think the blame is not all with me. But what *I* see is my own fault, and mean to correct it. She gave you good advice, dear—to consult your mother. But you shall have my assistance as well; and I shall begin at once, like a zealous ally. When I say at once—this is Sunday—I shall begin to-morrow, at one o'clock."

Then Henry sat down at her knee, and took her white hand in his brown ones.

"And what shall you do at one o'clock, my beautiful mother?"

"I shall return to society."

CHAPTER XI.

NEXT morning Mrs. Little gave her son the benefit of her night's reflections.

“You must let me have some money—all you can spare from your business; and whilst I am doing something with it for you, you must go to London, and do exactly what I tell you to do.

“Exactly? Then please write it down.”

“A very good plan. Can you go by the express this morning?”

“Why, yes, I could; only then I must run down to the works this minute, and speak to the foreman.”

“Well, dear, when you come back, your instructions shall be written, and your bag packed.”

“I say, mother, you are going into it in earnest. All the better for me.”

At twelve he started for London, with a beautiful set of carving-tools in his bag, and his mother's instructions in his pocket: those instructions sent him to a fashionable tailor that very afternoon. With some difficulty he

prevailed on this worthy to make him a dress-suit in twenty-four hours. Next day he introduced himself to the London trade, showed his carving-tools, and, after a hard day's work, succeeded in obtaining several orders.

Then he bought some white ties and gloves and an opera hat, and had his hair cut in Bond Street.

At seven he got his clothes at the tailor's, and at eight he was in the stalls of the opera. His mother had sent him there, to note the dress and public deportment of gentlemen and ladies, and use his own judgment. He found his attention terribly distracted by the music and the raptures it caused him; but still he made some observations; and, consequently, next day he bought some fashionable shirts and sleeve-studs and ribbon ties; ordered a morning suit of the same tailor, to be sent to him at Hillsborough; and after canvassing for customers all day, telegraphed his mother, and reached Hillsborough at eleven P.M.

At first sight of him Mrs. Little exclaimed—

“Oh! what have you done with your beautiful hair?”

He laughed, and said this was the fashion.

“But it is like a private soldier.”

“Exactly. Part of the Volunteer movement, perhaps.”

“Are you sure it is the fashion, dear?”

“Quite sure. All the swells in the opera were bullet-headed just like this.”

“Oh, if it is the fashion!” said Mrs. Little; and her mind succumbed under that potent word.

She asked him about the dresses of the ladies in the opera.

His description was very lame. He said he didn’t know he was expected to make notes of them.

“Well, but you might be sure I should like to know. Were there no ladies dressed as you would like to see your mother dressed?”

“Good heavens, no! I couldn’t fancy you in a lot of colours; and your beautiful head deformed into the shape of a gourd, with a beast of a chignon stuck out behind, made of dead hair.”

“No matter, Mr. Henry; I wish I had been with you at the opera. I should have seen something or other, that would have become me.” She gave a little sigh.

He was not to come home to dinner that day, but stay at the works, till she sent for him.

At six o’clock, Jael Dence came for him in a fly, and told him he was to go home with her.

“All right,” said he; “but how did you come there?”

“She bade me come and see her again—that day

I brought the bust. So I went to see her, and I found her so busy, and doing more than she was fit, poor thing, so I made bold to give her a hand. That was yesterday : and I shall come every day—if 'tis only for an hour—till the curtains are all up."

"The curtains ! what curtains ?"

"Ask no questions, and you will hear no lies."

Henry remonstrated ; Jael recommended patience : and, at last, they reached a little villa, half way up Heath Hill. "You are at home now," said Jael, drily. The new villa looked very gay that evening, for gas and fires were burning in every room.

The dining-room and drawing-room were both on the ground-floor ; had each one enormous window with plate glass, and were rooms of very fair size, divided by large folding-doors. These were now open, and Henry found his mother seated in the dining-room, with two workwomen, making curtains, and in the drawing-room were two more, sewing a carpet.

The carpet was down in the dining-room. The tea-table was set, and gave an air of comfort and housewifely foresight, in the midst of all the surrounding confusion.

Young Little stared. Mrs. Little smiled.

"Sit down, and never mind us : give him his tea, my good Jael."

Henry sat down, and, while Jael was making the

tea, ventured on a feeble expostulation. "It's all very fine, mother, but I don't like to see you make a slave of yourself."

"Slaving!" said Jael, with a lofty air of pity. "Why, she is working for her own." Rural logic!

"Oh," said Mrs. Little, to her, "these clever creatures we look up to so are rather stupid in some things. Slave! Why, I am a General leading my Amazons to victory." And she waved her needle gracefully in the air.

"Well, but why not let the shop do them, where you bought the curtains?"

"Because, my dear, the shop would do them very badly, very dearly, and very slowly. Do you remember reading to me about Cæsar, and what he said?—that 'a General should not say to his troops "*go* and attack the enemy, but *come* and attack the enemy.'" Well, that applies to needlework. I say to these ladies '*come*, sew these curtains, with me;' and the consequence is, we have done in three days, what no shop in Hillsborough would have done for us in a fortnight: but, as for slaves, the only one has been my good Jael there. She insisted on moving all the heavy boxes herself. She dismissed the porter; she said he had no pith in his arms—that was your expression, I think?"

"Ay, ma'am; that was my word: and I never

spoke a truer; the useless body. Why, ma'am, the girls in Cairnhope are most of them well-grown hussies, and used to work in the fields, and carry full sacks of grain up steps. Many's the time I have *run* with a sack of barley on my back: so let us hear no more about your bits of boxes. I wish my mind was as strong."

"Heaven forbid!" said Mrs. Little, with comic fervour. Henry laughed. But Jael only stared, rather stupidly. By-and-by she said she must go now.

"Henry shall take you home, dear."

"Nay, I can go by myself."

"It is raining a little. He will take you home in the cab."

"Nay, I've got legs of my own," said the rustic.

"Henry, dear," said the lady quietly, "take her home in the cab, and then come back to me."

At the gate of Woodbine Villa, Jael said, "it was not good-night this time; it was good-by; she was going home for Patty's marriage."

"But you will come back again?" said Henry.

"Nay, father would be all alone. You'll not see me here again, unless you are in sorrow or sickness."

"Ah, that's like you, Jael. Good-by, then, and God bless you wherever you go."

Jael summoned all her fortitude, and shook hands

with him in silence. They parted, and she fought down her tears, and he went gaily home to his mother. She told him she had made several visits, and been cordially received. "And this is how I paved the way for you. So, mind! I said my brother Raby wished you to take his name, and be his heir; but you had such a love of manufactures and things, you could not be persuaded to sit down as a country gentleman. 'Indeed,' I said, 'his love of the thing is so great that, in order to master it in all its branches, nothing less would serve him than disguising himself, and going as a workman. But now,' I said, 'he has had enough of that, so he has set up a small factory, and will, no doubt, soon achieve a success.' Then I told them about you and Doctor Amboyne. Your philanthropic views did not interest them for a single moment; but I could see the poor dear Doctor's friendship was a letter of introduction. There will be no difficulty, dear. There shall be none. What society Hillsborough boasts, shall open its arms to you."

"But I'm afraid I shall make mistakes."

"Our first little parties shall be given in this house. Your free and easy way will be excused in a host; the master of the house has a latitude; and, besides, you and I will rehearse. By the way, please be more careful about your nails; and you must always wear

gloves when you are not working ; and every afternoon you will take a lesson in dancing with me."

"I say, mother, do you remember teaching me to dance a minuet, when I was little?"

"Perfectly. We took great pains ; and, at last, you danced it like an angel. And, shall I tell you, you carry yourself very gracefully?—well, that is partly owing to the minuet. But a more learned professor will now take you in hand. He will be here to-morrow at five o'clock."

Mrs. Little's rooms being nearly square, she set up a round table, at which eight could dine. But she began with five or six.

Henry used to commit a solecism or two. Mrs. Little always noticed them, and told him. He never wanted telling twice. He was a genial young fellow, well read in the topics of the day, and had a natural wit ; Mrs. Little was one of those women who can fascinate when they choose ; and she chose now : her little parties rose to eight ; and as, at her table, everybody could speak without rudeness to everybody else, this round table soon began to eclipse the long tables of Hillsborough in attraction.

She and Henry went out a good deal ; and, at last, that which Mrs. Little's good sense had told her must happen, sooner or later, took place. They met.

He was standing talking with one of the male guests, when the servant announced Miss Carden ; and, whilst his heart was beating high, she glided into the room, and was received by the mistress of the house with all that superabundant warmth which ladies put on and men don't : guess why ?

When she turned round from this exuberant affection, she encountered Henry's black eye full of love and delight, and his tongue tied, and his swarthy cheek glowing red. She half started, and blushed in turn ; and with one glance drank in every article of dress he had on. Her eyes beamed pleasure and admiration for a moment, then she made a little curtsy, then she took a step towards him, and held out her hand a little coyly.

Their hands and eyes encountered ; and, after that delightful collision, they were both as demure as cats approaching cream.

Before they could say a word of any consequence, a cruel servant announced dinner, to the great satisfaction of every other soul in the room.

Of course they were parted at dinner-time ; but they sat exactly opposite each other, and Henry gazed at her so, instead of minding his business, that she was troubled a little, and fain to look another way. For all that she found opportunity once or twice to exchange

thoughts with him. Indeed, in the course of the two hours, she gave him quite a lesson how to speak with the eye—an art in which he was a mere child compared with her.

She conveyed to him that she saw his mother, and recognized her; and also she hoped to know her.

But some of her telegrams puzzled him.

When the gentlemen came up after dinner, she asked him if he would not present her to his mother.

“Oh, thank you!” said he, naïvely; and introduced them to each other.

The ladies curtsied with grace, but a certain formality, for they both felt the importance of the proceeding, and were a little on their guard.

But they had too many safe, yet interesting topics, to be very long at a loss.

“I should have known you by your picture, Mrs. Little.”

“Ah, then I fear it must be faded since I saw it last.”

“I think not. But I hope you will soon judge for yourself.”

Mrs. Little shook her head. Then she said, graciously, “I hear it is to you I am indebted that people can see I was once—what I am not now.”

Grace smiled, well pleased. “Ah,” said she, “I

wish you could have seen that extraordinary scene, and heard dear Mr. Raby—Oh, madam, let nothing make you believe you have no place in his great heart!”

“Pray, pray do not speak of that. This is no place. How could I bear it?” and Mrs. Little began to tremble.

Grace apologized. “How indiscreet I am; I blurt out everything that is in my heart.”

“And so do I,” said Henry, coming to her aid.

“Ah, *you!*” said Grace, a little saucily.

“We do not accept you for our pattern, you see. Pray excuse our bad taste, Harry.”

“Oh, excuse *me*, Mrs. Little. In some things I should indeed be proud if I could imitate him; but in others—of course—you know.”

“Yes, I know. My dear, there is your friend Mr. Applethwaite.”

“I see him,” said Henry, carelessly.

“Yes; but you don’t see everything,” said Grace, slyly.

“Not all at once, like you ladies. Bother my friend Applethwaite. Well, if I must—I must. Here goes—from Paradise to Applethwaite.”

He went off, and both ladies smiled, and one blushed; and, to cover her blush, said, “It is not every son that has the grace to appreciate his mother so.”

Mrs. Little opened her eyes at first, and then made her nearest approach to a laugh, which was a very broad smile, displaying all her white teeth. "That is a turn I was very far from expecting," said she.

The ice was now broken, and, when Henry returned, he found them conversing so rapidly, and so charmingly, that he could do little more than listen.

At last Mr. Carden came in from some other party, and carried his daughter off, and the bright evening came too soon to a close; but a great point had been gained; Mrs. Little and Grace Carden were acquaintances now, and cordially disposed to be friends.

The next time these lovers met, matters did not go quite so smoothly. It was a large party, and Mr. Coventry was there. The lady of the house was a friend of his, and assigned Miss Carden to him. He took her down to dinner, and Henry sat a long way off, but on the opposite side of the table.

He was once more doomed to look on at the assiduities of his rival, and it spoilt his dinner for him.

But he was beginning to learn that these things must be in society; and his mother, on the other side of the table, shrugged her shoulders to him, and conveyed by that and a look that it was a thing to make light of.

In the evening the rivals came into contact.

Little, being now near her he loved, was in high spirits, and talked freely and agreeably. He made quite a little circle round him; and as Grace was one of the party, and cast bright and approving eyes on him, it stimulated him still more, and he became quite brilliant.

Then Coventry, who was smarting with jealousy, set himself to cool all this down by a subtle cold sort of jocoseness, which, without being downright rude, operates on conversation of the higher kind like frost on expanding buds. It had its effect, and Grace chafed secretly, but could not interfere. It was done very cleverly. Henry was bitterly annoyed; but his mother, who saw his rising ire in his eye, carried him off to see a flowering cactus in a hot-house that was accessible from the drawing-room. When she had got him there, she soothed him and lectured him. "You are not a match for that man in these petty acts of annoyance, to which a true gentleman and a noble rival would hardly descend, I think; at all events, a wise one would not; for, believe me, Mr. Coventry will gain nothing by this."

"Isn't driving us off the field something? Oh, for the good old days when men settled these things in five minutes, like men; the girl to one, and the grave to t'other."

“Heaven forbid those savage days should ever return. We will defeat this gentlemen quietly, if you please.”

“How?”

“Well, whenever he does this sort of thing, hide your anger; be polite and dignified; but gradually drop the conversation, and manage to convey to the rest that it is useless contending against a wet blanket. Why, you foolish boy, do you think Grace Carden likes him any the better? Whilst you and I talk, she is snubbing him finely. So you must stay here with me, and give them time to quarrel. There, to lessen the penance, we will talk about her. Last time we met her, she told me you were the best-dressed gentleman in the room.”

“And did she like me any better for that?”

“Don’t you be ungracious, dear. She was proud of you. It gratified her that you should look well in every way. Oh, if you think that we are going to change our very natures for you, and make light of dress——why did I send you to a London tailor? and why am I always at you about your gloves?”

“Mother, I am on thorns.”

“Well, we will go back. Stop; let me take a peep first.”

She took a peep, and reported,

“The little circle is broken up. Mr. Coventry could not amuse them as you did. Ah! she is in the sulks, and he is mortified. I know there’s a French proverb ‘Les absens ont toujours tort.’ But it is quite untrue; judicious absence is a weapon, and I must show you how and when to use it.”

“Mother, you are my best friend. What shall we do next?”

“Why, go back to the room with me, and put on imperturbable good-humour, and ignore him; only mind you do that politely, or you will give him an advantage he is too wise to give you.”

Henry was about to obey these orders, but Miss Carden took the word out of his mouth.

“Well! the cactus!”

Then, as it is not easy to reply to a question so vague, Henry hesitated.

“There, I thought so,” said Grace.

“What did you think?” inquired Mrs. Little.

“Oh, people don’t go into hot-houses to see cactus; they go to flirt, or else gossip. I’ll tell Mrs. White to set a shorthand writer in the great aloe, next party she gives. Confess, Mrs. Little, you went to criticize poor us, and there is no cactus at all.”

“Miss Carden, I’m affronted. You shall smart for

this. Henry take her directly, and show her the cactus, and clear your mother's character."

Henry offered his arm directly, and they went gaily off.

"Is she gone to flirt, or to gossip?" asked a young lady.

"Our watches must tell us that," said Mrs. Little. "If they stay five minutes—gossip."

"And how many—flirtation?"

"Ah, my dear, *you* know better than I do. What do you say? Five-and-twenty?"

The young ladies giggled.

Then Mr. Coventry came out strong. He was mortified, he was jealous; he saw a formidable enemy had entered the field, and had just outwitted and out-manceuvred him. So what does he do but step up to her, and say to her, with the most respectful grace, "May I be permitted to welcome you back to this part of the world? I am afraid I cannot exactly claim your acquaintance; but I have often heard my father speak of you with the highest admiration. My name is Coventry."

"Mr. Coventry, of Bollinghope?" (He bowed.) "Yes; I had the pleasure of knowing your mother in former days."

"You have deserted us too long."

"I do not flatter myself I have been missed.

“Is anybody ever missed, Mrs. Little? Believe me, few persons are welcomed back so cordially as you are.”

“That is very flattering, Mr. Coventry. It is for my son’s sake I have returned to society.”

“No doubt; but you will remain there for your own. Society is your place. You are at home in it, and were born to shine in it.”

“What makes you think that, pray?” and the widow’s cheek flushed a little.

“Oh, Mrs. Little, I have seen something of the world. Count me amongst your most respectful admirers. It is a sentiment I have a right to, since I inherit it.”

“Well, Mr. Coventry, then I give you leave to admire me—if you can. Ah, here they come. Two minutes! I am afraid it was neither gossip nor flirtation, but only botany.”

Grace and Henry came back, looking very radiant.

“What do you think?” said Grace, “I never was more surprised in my life; there really is a cactus, and a night ceres into the bargain. Mrs. Little, behold a penitent. I bring you my apology, and a jardinea.”

“Oh, how sweet! Never mind the apology. Quarrel with me often, and bring me a jardinea. I’ll always make it up on those terms.”

“Miss White,” said Grace, pompously, “I shall

require a few dozen cuttings from your tree, please tell the gardener. Arrangements are such, I shall have to grow jardenias on a scale hitherto unprecedented."

There was a laugh, and in the middle of it a servant announced Miss Carden's carriage.

"What attentive servants you have, Miss White. I requested that man to be on the watch, and, if I said a good thing, to announce my carriage directly; and he did it pat. Now see what an effective exit that gives me. Good-by, Miss White, good-by, Mrs. Little; may you all disappear as neatly."

Mr. Coventry stepped smartly forward, and offered her his arm with courteous deference; she took it, and went down with him, but shot over his shoulder a side-glance of reproach at Little, for not being so prompt as his rival.

"What spirits!" said a young lady.

"Yes," said another; "but she was as dull as the grave last time I met her."

So ended that evening, with its little ups and downs.

Soon after this, Henry called on Miss Carden, and spent a heavenly hour with her. He told her his plans for getting on in the world, and she listened with a demure complacency, that seemed to imply she acknowledged a personal interest in his success. She told him

she had always *admired* his independence in declining his uncle's offer, and now she was beginning to *approve* it: "It becomes a man," said she.

From the future they went to the past, and she reminded him of the snow-storm and the scene in the church; and, in speaking of it, her eye deepened in colour, her voice was low and soft, and she was all tenderness.

If love was not directly spoken, it was constantly implied, and, in fact, that is how true love generally speaks. The eternal "*Je vous aime*" of the French novelist is false to nature, let me tell you.

"And, when I come back from London, I hope your dear mother will give me opportunities of knowing her better."

"She will be delighted: but going to London!"

"Oh, we spend six weeks in London every year; and this is our time. I was always glad to go, before—London is very gay now, you know—but I am not glad now."

"No more am I, I can assure you. I am very sorry."

"Six weeks will soon pass."

"Six weeks of pain is a good long time. You are the sunshine of my life. And you are going to shine on others, and leave me dark and solitary."

"But how do you know I shall shine on others?"

Perhaps I shall be duller than you will, and think all the more of Hillsborough, for being in London."

The melting tone in which this was said, and the coy and tender side-glance that accompanied it, were balm of Gilead to the lover.

He took comfort, and asked her, cheerfully, if he might write to her.

She hesitated a single moment, and then said "Yes."

She added, however, after a pause, "But you can't; for you don't know my address."

"But you will tell me."

"Never! never! Fifty-eight Clarges Street."

"When do you go?"

"The day after to-morrow: at twelve o'clock."

"May I see you off at the train?"

She hesitated. "If—you—like," said she, slowly: "but I think you had better not."

"Oh, let me see the last of you."

"Use your own judgment, dear."

The monosyllable slipped out, unintentionally: she was thinking of something else. Yet, as soon as she had uttered it, she said "Oh!" and blushed all over. "I forgot I was not speaking to a lady," said she, innocently; then, right archly, "please forgive me."

He caught her hand, and kissed it devotedly.

Then she quivered all over. "You mustn't," said

she, with the gentlest possible tone of reproach. "Oh dear, I am so sorry I am going." And she turned her sweet eyes on him, with tears in them.

Then a visitor was announced, and they parted.

He was deep in love. He was also, by nature, rather obstinate. Although she had said she thought it would be better for him not to see her off, yet he would go to the station, and see the last of her.

He came straight from the station, to his mother. She was upstairs. He threw himself into a chair, and there she found him, looking ghastly.

"Oh, mother! what shall I do?"

"What is the matter, love?"

"She is false; she is false. She has gone up to London, with that Coventry."

CHAPTER XII.

“WHAT! eloped?”

“Heaven forbid. Why, mother, I didn't say she was alone with him; her father was of the party.”

“Then surely you are distressing yourself more than you need. She goes to London with her papa, and Mr. Coventry happens to go up the same day; that is really all.”

“Oh, but, mother, it was no accident. I watched his face, and there was no surprise when he came up with his luggage and saw her.”

Mrs. Little pondered for a minute, and then said, “I daresay all her friends knew she was going up to London to-day; and Mr. Coventry determined to go up the same day. Why, he is courting her: my dear Henry, you knew before to-day that you had a rival, and a determined one. If you go and blame her for his acts, it will be apt to end in his defeating you.”

“Will it? Then I won't blame her at all.”

“You had better not till you are quite sure: it is one way of losing a high-spirited girl.”

“I tell you I won't. Mother!”

“Well, dear?”

“When I asked leave to come to the station, and see her off, she seemed put out.”

“Did she forbid you?”

“No; but she did not like it, somehow. Ah, she knew beforehand that Coventry would be there.”

“Gently, gently! She might think it possible, and yet not know it. More likely it was on account of her father. You have never told him that you love his daughter?”

“No.”

“And he is rather mercenary: perhaps that is too strong a word; but, in short, a mere man of the world. Might it not be that Grace Carden would wish him to learn your attachment either from your lips, or from her own, and not detect it in an impetuous young man's conduct on the platform of a railway, at the tender hour of parting?”

“Oh, how wise you are, and what an insight you have got! Your words are balm. But, there—— he is with her for ever so long, and I am here all alone.”

“Not quite alone, love: your counsellor is by your side, and may, perhaps, show you how to turn this to your advantage. You write to her every day, and then the postman will be a powerful rival to Mr. Coventry,

perhaps a more powerful one than Mr. Coventry to you."

Acting on this advice, Henry wrote every day to Grace Carden. She was not so constant in her replies; but she did write to him now and then, and her letters breathed a gentle affection that allayed his jealousy, and made this period of separation the happiest six weeks he had ever known. As for Grace, about three o'clock she used to look out for the postman, and be uneasy and restless if he was late, and, when his knock came, her heart would bound, and she generally flew upstairs with the prize, to devour it in secret. She fed her heart full with these letters, and loved the writer better and better. For once the present suitor lost ground, and the absent suitor gained it. Mrs. Little divined as much from Grace's letters and messages to herself; and she said with a smile, "You see 'Les absents n'ont pas toujours tort.'"

CHAPTER XIII.

I MUST now deal briefly with a distinct vein of incidents, that occurred between young Little's first becoming a master and the return of the Cardens from London.

Little, as a master, acted up to the philanthropic theories he had put forth when a workman.

The wet-grinders in his employ submitted to his improved plates, his paved and drained floor, and cosy fires, without a murmur or a word of thanks. By degrees they even found out they were more comfortable than other persons in their condition, and congratulated themselves upon it.

The dry-grinders consented, some of them, to profit by his improved fans. Others would not take the trouble to put the fans in gear, and would rather go on inhaling metal-dust and stone grit.

Henry reasoned, but in vain ; remonstrated, but with little success. Then he discharged a couple ; they retired with the mien of martyrs ; and their successors

were admitted on a written agreement that left them no option. The fan triumphed.

The file-cutters were more troublesome ; they clung to death and disease, like limpets to established rocks ; they would not try any other bed than bare lead, and they would not wash at the taps Little had provided, and they would smuggle in dinners and eat with poisoned hands.

Little reasoned, and remonstrated, but with such very trifling success, that, at last, he had to put down the iron heel ; he gave the file-cutters a printed card, with warning to leave on one side, and his reasons on the other.

In twenty-four hours he received a polite remonstrance from the secretary of the File-cutters' Union.

He replied that the men could remain, if they would sign an agreement to forego certain suicidal practices, and to pay fines in case of disobedience ; said fines to be deducted from their earnings.

Then the secretary suggested a conference at the "Cutler's Arms." Little assented : and there was a hot argument. The father of all file-cutters objected to tyranny and innovation : Little maintained that Innovation was nearly always Improvement—the world being silly—and was manifestly improvement in the case under consideration. He said also he was merely

doing what the Union itself ought to do : protecting the life of Union men who were too childish and wrong-headed to protect it themselves.

“ We prefer a short life and a merry one, Mr. Little,” said the father of all file-cutters.

“ A life of disease is not a merry one : slow poisoning is not a pleasant way of living, but a miserable way of dying. None but the healthy are happy. Many a Croesus would give half his fortune for a poor man’s stomach ; yet you want your cutlers to be sick men all their days, and not gain a shilling by it. Man alive, I am not trying to lower their wages.”

“ Ay, but you are going the way to do it.”

“ How do you make that out ? ”

“ The trade is full already ; and, if you force the men to live to threescore and ten, you will overcrowd it so, they will come to starvation wages.”

Little was staggered at this thunderbolt of logic, and digested the matter in silence for a moment. Then he remembered something that had fallen from Dr. Amboyne ; and he turned to Grotait. “ What do you say to that, sir ? Would you grind Death’s scythe for him (at the list price) to thin the labour-market ? ”

Grotait hesitated for once. In his heart he went with the file-cutter : but his understanding encumbered him.

“Starvation,” said he, “is as miserable a death as poisoning. But why make a large question out of a small one, with rushing into generalities? I really think you might let Mr. Little settle this matter with the individual workmen. He has got a little factory, and a little crotchet; he chooses to lengthen the lives of six file-cutters. He says to them, ‘My money is my own, and I’ll give you so much of it, in return for so much work plus so much washing and other novelties.’ The question is, does his pay cover the new labour of washing, etc., as well as the old?”

“Mr. Grotait, I pay the highest price that is going.”

“In that case, I think the Unions are not bound to recognize the discussion. Mr. Little, I have some other reasons to lay before my good friend here, and I hope to convince him. Now, there’s a little party of us going to dine to-morrow at ‘Savage’s Hotel,’ up by the new reservoir; give us the pleasure of your company, will you? and, by that time, perhaps I may have smoothed this little matter for you.” Little thanked him, accepted the invitation, and left the pair of secretaries together.

When he was gone, Grotait represented that public opinion would go with Little on this question; and the outrages he had sustained would be all ripped up by the *Hillsborough Liberal*, and the two topics combined in an

ugly way ; and all for what ?—to thwart a good-hearted young fellow in a philanthropical crotchet, which, after all, did him honour, and would never be imitated by any other master in Hillsborough. And so, for once, this Machiavel sided with Henry, not from the purest motives, yet, mind you, not without a certain mixture of right feeling and humanity.

On the Sunday Henry dined with him and his party, at “Savage’s Hotel,” and the said dinner rather surprised Henry ; the meats were simple, but of good quality, and the wines, which were all brought out by Grotait, were excellent. That old Saw, who retailed ale and spirits to his customers, would serve nothing less to his guests than champagne and burgundy. And, if the cheer was generous, the host was admirable ; he showed, at the head of his genial board, those qualities which, coupled with his fanaticism, had made him the Doge of the Hillsborough trades. He was primed on every subject that could interest his guests, and knew something about nearly everything else. He kept the ball always going, but did not monologuize, except when he was appealed to as a judge, and then did it with a mellow grace that no man can learn without Nature’s aid. There is no society, however distinguished, in which Grotait would not have been accepted as a polished and admirable converser.

Add to this, that he had an art, which was never quite common, but is now becoming rare, of making his guests feel his friends—for the time, at all events.

Young Little sat amazed, and drank in his words with delight, and could not realize that this genial philosopher was the person who had launched a band of ruffians at him. Yet, in his secret heart, he could not doubt it: and so he looked and listened with a marvellous mixture of feelings, on which one could easily write pages of analysis, very curious, and equally tedious.

They dined at three; and, at five, they got up, as agreed beforehand, and went to inspect the reservoir in course of construction. A more compendious work of art was never projected: the contractors had taken for their basis a mountain gorge, with a stream flowing through it down towards Hillsborough; all they had to do was to throw an embankment across the lower end of the gorge, and turn it to a mighty basin open to receive the stream, and the drainage from four thousand acres of hill. From this lake a sixty-foot weir was to deal out the water-supply to the mill-owners below, and the surplus to the people of Hillsborough, distant about eight miles on an easy decline.

Now, as the reservoir must be full at starting, and would then be eighty feet deep in the centre, and a mile long, and a quarter of a mile broad on the average, an

embankment of uncommon strength was required to restrain so great a mass of water ; and this was what the Hillsborough worthies were curious about. They strolled out to the works, and then tea was to come out after them, the weather being warm and fine. Close to the works they found a foreman of engineers smoking his pipe ; and interrogated him. He showed them a rising wall, five hundred feet wide at the base, and told them it was to be ninety feet high, narrowing, gradually, to a summit twelve feet broad. As the whole embankment was to be twelve hundred feet long at the top, this gave some idea of the bulk of the materials to be used : those materials were clay, shale, mill-stone, and sandstone of looser texture. The engineer knew Grotait, and brought him a drawing of the mighty cone to be erected. “Why, it will be a mountain !” said Little.

“Not far from that, sir : and yet you’ll never see half the work. Why we had an army of navvies on it last autumn, and laid a foundation sixty feet deep ; and these first courses are all bonded in to the foundation, and bonded together, as you see. We are down to solid rock, and no water can get to undermine us. The puddlewall is sixteen feet wide at starting, and diminishes to four feet at the top : so no water can creep in through our jacket.”

“But what are these apertures ?” inquired Grotait.

“ Oh, those are the waste-pipes? They pass through the embankment obliquely, to the weir-dam: they can be opened, or shut, by valves, and run off ten thousand cubic feet of water a minute.”

“ But won't that prove a hole in your armour? Why, these pipes must be in twenty joints, at least.”

“ Say fifty-five; you'll be nearer the mark.”

“ And suppose one or two of these fifty-five joints should leak? You'll have an everlasting solvent in the heart of your pile, and you can't get at them, you know, to mend them.”

Of course not; but they are double as thick as ever were used before; and have been severely tested before laying 'em down: besides, don't you see each of them has got his great coat on? eighteen inches of puddle all the way.”

“ Ah,” said Grotait, “ all the better. But it is astonishing what big embankments will sometimes burst if a leaky pipe runs through them. I don't think it is the water, altogether; the water seems to make air inside them, and that proves as bad for them as wind in a man's stomach.”

“ Governor,” said the engineer, “ don't you let bees swarm in your bonnet. Ousely reservoir will last as long as them hills, there.”

“No doubt, lad, since thou’s had a hand in making it.”

The laugh this dry rejoinder caused was interrupted by the waitress bringing out tea; and these Hillsborough worthies felt bound to chaff her; but she, being Yorkshire too, gave them as good as they brought, and a trifle to spare.

Tea was followed by brandy-and-water and pipes; and these came out in such rapid succession, that when Grotait drove Little and two others home, his utterance was thick, and his speech sententious.

Little found Bayne waiting for him, with the news that he had left Mr. Cheetham.

“How was that?”

“Oh, fell between two stools. Tried to smooth matters between Cheetham and the hands: but Cheetham, he wants a manager to side with him through thick and thin; and the men want one to side with them. He has sacked me, and the men are glad I’m going: and this comes of loving peace, when the world hates it.”

“And I am glad of it, for now you are my foreman. I know what you are worth, if those fools don’t.”

“Are you in earnest, Little?”

“Why not?”

“I hear you have been dining with Grotait, and he

always makes the liquor fly. Wait till to-morrow. Talk it over with Mrs. Little here. I'm afraid I'm not the right sort for a servant. Too fond of 'the balmy,' and averse to the whole hog." (The poor fellow was quite discouraged.)

"The very man I want to soothe me at odd times: they rile me so with their suicidal folly. Now, look here, old fellow, if you don't come to me, I'll give you a good hiding."

"Oh! well, sooner than you should break the peace — Mrs. Little, I'd rather be with him at two guineas a week than with any other master at three."

When he had got this honest fellow to look after his interests, young Little gave more way than ever to his natural bent for invention, and he was often locked up for twelve hours at a stretch, in a room he called his studio. Indeed, such was his ardour, that he sometimes left home after dinner, and came back to the works, and then the fitful fire of his forge might be seen, and the blows of his hammer heard, long after midnight.

Dr. Amboyne encouraged him in this, and was, indeed, the only person admitted to his said studio. There the Democritus of Hillsborough often sat and smoked his cigar, and watched the progress towards perfection of projected inventions great and small.

One day the Doctor called and asked Bayne whether

Henry was in his studio. Bayne said no; he thought he had seen him in the saw-grinder's hull. "And that struck me; for it is not often his lordship condescends to go there now."

"Let us see what 'his lordship' is at."

They approached stealthily, and, looking through a window, saw the inventor standing, with his arms folded, and his eyes bent on a grinder at his work: the man was pressing down a six-foot saw on a grindstone with all his might; and Little was looking on, with a face compounded of pity, contempt, and lofty contemplation.

"That is the game now, sir," whispered Bayne: "always in the clouds, or else above 'em. A penny for your thoughts, sir!"

Henry started, as men do who are roused from deep contemplation: however, he soon recovered himself, and, with a sort of rude wit of his own, he held out his hand for the penny.

Amboyne fumbled in his pocket, and gave him a stamp.

Little seized it, and delivered himself as follows: "My thoughts, gentlemen, were general and particular. I was making a reflection how contented people are to go bungling on, doing a thing the wrong way, when the right way is obvious: and my particular observation was,

that these long saws are ground in a way which offends the grammar of mechanics. Here's a piece of steel six feet long, but not so wide as the grindstone : what can be plainer than that such a strip ought to be ground lengthwise?—then the whole saw would receive the grindstone in a few seconds. Instead of that, on they go, year after year, grinding them obliquely, and with a violent exertion that horrifies a fellow like me, who goes in for economy of labour, and have done all my life. Look at that fellow working. What a waste of muscle ! Now, if you will come to my studio, I think I can show you how long saws *will* be ground in the days of civilization."

His eye, which had been turned inwards during his reverie, dullish and somewhat fish-like, now sparkled like a hot coal, and he led the way eagerly.

"Pray humour him, sir," said Bayne, compassionately.

They followed him up a horrid stair, and entered his studio ; and a marvellous place it was : a forge on one side, a carpenter's bench and turning-lathe on the other ; and the floor so crowded with models, castings, and that profusion of new ideas in material form which housewives call litter, that the artist had been obliged to cut three little ramified paths, a foot wide, and so meander about the room, as struggles a wasp over spilt glue.

He gave the Doctor the one chair, and wriggled down a path after pencil and paper: he jumped with them, like a cat with a mouse, on to the carpenter's bench, and was soon absorbed in drawing.

When he had drawn a bit, he tore up the paper, and said, "Let me think."

"The request is unusual," said Dr. Amboyne; "however, if you will let us smoke, we will let you think."

No reply from the inventor, whose eye was already turned inwards, and fishlike again.

Doctor Amboyne and Bayne smoked peaceably a while. But presently the inventor uttered a kind of shout.

"Eureka," said the Doctor calmly, and emitted a curly cloud.

Little dashed at the paper, and soon produced a drawing. It represented two grindstones set apparently to grind each other, a large one below, a small one above.

"There—the large stone shall revolve rapidly, say from north to south; the small one from south to north: that is the idea which has just struck me, and completes the invention. It is to be worked, not by one grinder, but two. A stands south, and passes the saw northward between the two grindstones to B.—The stones must be hung, so as just to allow the passage of

the saw.—B draws it out, and reverses it, and passes it back to A. Those two journeys of the saw will grind the whole length of it for a breadth of two or three inches, and all in forty seconds. Now do you see what I meant by the grammar of mechanics? It was the false grammar of those duffers, grinding a long thing sideways instead of lengthways, that struck my mind first. And now see what one gets to at last if one starts from grammar. By this machine two men can easily grind as many big saws as twenty men could grind on single stones: and instead of all that heavy, coarse labour, and dirt, and splashing, my two men shall do the work as quietly and as easily as two printers, one feeding a machine with paper, and his mate drawing out the printed sheet at the other end.”

“By Jove,” said Dr. Amboyne, “I believe this is a great idea. What do you say, Mr. Bayne?”

“Well, sir, a servant mustn’t always say his mind.”

“Servant be hanged!” said Little. “*That* for a friend who does not speak his mind.”

“Well then, gentlemen, it is the most simple and beautiful contrivance I ever saw. And there’s only one thing to be done with it.”

“Patent it?”

“No; hide it; lock it up in your own breast, and try and forget it. Your life won’t be worth a

week's purchase if you set up that machine in Hillsborough."

"Hillsborough is not all the world. I can take it to some free country—America—or Russia: there's a fortune in it. Stop, suppose I was to patent it at home and abroad, and then work it in the United States and the Canadas. That would force the invention upon this country by degrees."

"Yes, and then, if you sell the English patent, and insure the purchaser's life, you may turn a few thousands, and keep a whole skin yourself."

Little assured Bayne he had no intention of running his head against the Saw-grinders' Union. "We are very comfortable as it is, and I value my life more than I used to do."

"I think I know why," said Doctor Amboyne. "But, whatever you do, patent your inventions. Patent them all."

Henry promised he would; but forgot his promise, and, having tasted blood, so to speak, was soon deep in a far more intricate puzzle, viz., how to grind large circular saws by machinery. This problem, and his steel railway clip, which was to displace the present system of fastening down the rails, absorbed him so, that he became abstracted in the very streets, and did not see his friends when they passed.

One day, when he was deeply engaged in his studio, Bayne tapped at the door, and asked to speak to him.

“Well, what is it?” said the inventor, rather peevishly.

“Oh, nothing,” said Bayne, with a bitter air of mock resignation. “Only a cloud on the peaceful horizon; that is all. A letter from Mary Anne.”

“SIR,—Four of your saws are behind-hand with their contributions, and, being deaf to remonstrance, I am obliged to apply to you, to use your influence.

“MARY ANNE.”

“Well,” said Henry, “Mary Anne is in the right. Confound their dishonesty: they take the immense advantages the Saw-grinders’ Union gives them, yet they won’t pay the weekly contribution, without which the Union can’t exist. Go and find out who they are, and blow them up.”

“What! me disturb the balmy?”

“Bother the balmy! I can’t be worried with such trifles. I’m inventing.”

“But, Mr. Little, would not the best way be for *you* just to stop it quietly and peaceably out of their pay, and send it to Grotait?”

Little, after a moment’s reflection, said he had no

legal right to do that. Besides, it was not his business to work the Saw-grinders' Union for Grotait. "Who is this Mary Anne?"

"The saw-grinders, to be sure."

"What, all of them? Poor Mary Anne!"

He then inquired how he was to write back to her.

"Oh, write under cover to Grotait. He is Mary Anne, to all intents and purposes."

"Well, write the jade a curt note, in both our names, and say we disapprove the conduct of the defaulters, and will signify our disapproval to them; but that is all we can do."

This letter was written, and Bayne made it as oleaginous as language permits; and there the matter rested apparently.

But, as usual, after the polite came the phonetic. Next week Henry got a letter thus worded:—

"MISTER LITL, If them grinders of yores dosent send their money i shall com an' fech strings if the devil stans i t'road.

"MOONRAKER."

Mr. Little tossed this epistle contemptuously into the fire, and invented on.

Two days after that he came to the works, and found

the saw-grinders standing in a group, with their hands in their pockets.

“Well, lads, what’s up?”

“Mary Anne has been here.”

“And two pair of wheel-bands gone.”

“Well, men, you know whose fault it is.”

“Nay, but it is — hard my work should be stopped because another man is in arrears with trade. What d’ye think to do, Governor? buy some more bands?”

“Certainly not. I won’t pay for your fault. It is a just claim, you know. Settle it among yourselves.”

With this, he retired to his studio.

When the men saw he did not care a button whether his grindstones revolved or not, they soon brought the defaulters to book. Bayne was sent upstairs, to beg Mr. Little to advance the trade contributions, and stop the amount from the defaulters’ wages.

This being settled, Little and Bayne went to the “Cutlers’ Arms,” and Bayne addressed the barmaid thus, “Can we see Mary Anne?”

“He is shaving.”

“Well, when she is shaved, we shall be in the parlour, tell her.”

In a moment or two Grotait bustled in, wiping his

face with a towel as he came, and welcomed his visitors cordially. "Fine weather, gentlemen."

Bayne cut that short. "Mr. Grotait, we have lost our bands."

"You surprise me."

"And perhaps you can tell us how to get them back."

"Experience teaches that they always come back when the men pay their arrears."

"Well, it is agreed to stop the sum due out of wages."

"A very proper course."

"What is it we have got to pay?"

"How can I tell without book? Pray, Mr. Little, don't imagine that I set these matters agate. All I do is to mediate afterwards. I'll go and look at the contribution-book."

He went out, and soon returned, and told them it was one sovereign contribution for each man, and five shillings each for Mary Anne.

"What, for her services in rattening us?" said Little, drily.

"And her risk," suggested Grotait, in dulcet tones.

Little paid the five pounds, and then asked Grotait for the bands.

"Good heavens, Mr. Little, do you think I have got your bands?"

“You must excuse Mr. Little, sir,” said Bayne. “He is a stranger, and doesn’t know the comedy. Perhaps you will oblige us with a note where we can find them.”

“Hum!” said Grotait, with the air of one suddenly illuminated. “What did I hear somebody say about these bands? Hum! Give me an hour or two to make inquiries.”

“Don’t say an hour or two, sir, when the men have got to make up lost time. We will give you a little grace; we will take a walk down street, and perhaps it will come to your recollection.”

“Hum!” said Grotait; and as that was clearly all they were to get out of him just then, they left, and took a turn.

In half an hour they came back again, and sat down in the parlour.

Grotait soon joined them. “I’ve been thinking,” said he, “what a pity it is we can’t come to some friendly arrangement, with intelligent masters like Mr. Little, to deduct the natty money every week from the men’s wages.”

“Excuse me,” said Bayne, “we are not here for discussion. We want our bands.”

“Do you doubt that you will get them, sir? Did ever I break faith with master or man?”

“No, no,” said the pacific Bayne, alarmed at the sudden sternness of his tone. “You are as square as a die—when you get it all your own way. Why, Mr. Little, Cheetham’s bands were taken one day, and, when he had made the men pay their arrears, he was directed where to find the bands; but, meantime, somebody out of trade had found them, and stolen them. Down came bran-new bands to the wheel directly, and better than we had lost. And my cousin Godby, that has a water-wheel, was rattened, by his scythe-blades being flung in the dam. He squared with Mary Anne, and then he got a letter to say where the blades were. But one was missing. He complained to Mr. Grotait here, and Mr. Grotait put his hand in his pocket directly, and paid the trade-price of the blade—three shillings, I think it was.”

“Yes,” said Grotait; “‘but,’ I remember I said at the time, ‘you must not construe this that I was any way connected with the rattening.’ But some are deaf to reason. Hallo!” *What's here*

“What is the matter, sir?”

“Why, what is that in the fender? Your eyes are younger than mine.”

And Mr. Grotait put up his gold double eyeglass, and looked, with marked surprise and curiosity, at a note that lay in the fender.

Mr. Bayne had been present at similar comedies, and was not polite enough to endorse Mr. Grotait's surprise. He said, coolly, "It will be the identical note we are waiting for." He stooped down and took it out of the fender, and read it.

" ' TO MR. LITTLE, OR MR. BAYNE.

" ' GENTLEMEN, — In the bottom hull turn up the horsing, and in the trough all the missing bands will be found. Apologising for the little interruption, it is satisfactory things are all arranged without damage, and hope all will go agreeably when the rough edge is worn off. Trusting these nocturnal visits will be no longer necessary, I remain

" ' THE SHY MAIDEN.' "

As soon as he had obtained this information, Bayne bustled off; but Mary Anne detained Henry Little, to moralize.

Said she, "This rattening for trade contributions is the result of bad and partial laws. If A contracts with B, and breaks his contract, B has no need to ratten A: he can sue him. But if A, being a workman, contracts with B and all the other letters, and breaks his contract, B and all the other letters have no legal remedy. This bad and partial law, occurring in a country that has

tasted impartial laws, revolts common sense and the consciences of men. Whenever this sort of thing occurs in any civilized country, up starts that pioneer judge we call Judge Lynch; in other words, private men combine, and make their own laws, to cure the folly of legislatures. And, mark me, if these irregular laws are unjust, they fail; if they are just, they stand. Rattening could never have stood its ground so many years in Hillsborough if it had not been just, and necessary to the place, under the partial and iniquitous laws of Great Britain."

"And pray," inquired Little, "where is the justice of taking a master's gear because his paid workman is in your debt?"

"And where is the justice of taking a lodger's goods in execution for the house-tenant's debt, which debt the said lodger is helping the said tenant to pay? We must do the best we can. No master is rattened for a workman's fault without several warnings. But the masters will never co-operate with justice till their bands and screws go. That wakes them up directly."

"Well, Mr. Grotait, I never knew you worsted in an argument; and this nut is too hard for my teeth, so I'm off to my work. Ratten me now and then for your own people's fault, if you are *quite* sure justice and

public opinion demand it; but no more gunpowder, please.”

“Heaven forbid, Mr. Little. Gunpowder! I abhor it.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THERE came a delightful letter from Grace Carden announcing her return on a certain evening, and hoping to see Henry next morning.

He called accordingly, and was received with outstretched hands, and sparkling eyes, and words that repaid him for her absence.

After the first joyful burst, she inquired tenderly, why he was so pale: had he been ill?

“No.”

“No trouble nor anxiety, dear?”

“A little, at first, till your sweet letters made me happy. No; I did not even know that I was pale. Overstudy, I suppose. Inventing is hard work.”

“What are you inventing?”

“All manner of things. Machine to forge large axes; another to grind circular saws; a railway clip: but you don't care about such things.”

“I beg your pardon, sir. I care about whatever interests you.”

“Well, these inventions interest me very much. One way or other, they are roads to fortune; and you know why I desire fortune.”

“Ah, that I do. But excuse me, you value independence more. Oh, I respect you for it. Only don't make yourself pale, or you will make me unhappy, and a foe to invention.”

On this Mr. Little made himself red instead of pale, and beamed with happiness.

They spent a delightful hour together, and, even when they parted, their eyes lingered on each other.

Soon after this the Cardens gave a dinner-party, and Grace asked if she might invite Mrs. Little and Mr. Little.

“What, is he presentable?”

“More than that,” said Grace, colouring. “They are both very superior to most of our Hillsborough friends.”

“Well, but did you not tell me he had quarrelled with Mr. Raby?”

“No, not quarrelled. Mr. Raby offered to make him his heir: but he chooses to be independent, and make his own fortune, that's all.”

“Well, if you think our old friend would not take it amiss, invite them by all means. I remember her a lovely woman.”

So the Littles were invited ; and the young ladies admired Mr. Little on the whole, but sneered at him a little for gazing on Miss Carden, as if she was a divinity : the secret, which escaped the father, girls of seventeen detected in a minute, and sat whispering over it in the drawing-room.

After this invitation, Henry and his mother called, and then Grace called on Mrs. Little ; and this was a great step for Henry, the more so as the ladies really took to each other.

The course of true love was beginning to run smooth, when it was disturbed by Mr. Coventry.

That gentleman's hopes had revived in London ; Grace Carden had been very kind and friendly to him, and always in such good spirits, that he thought absence had cured her of Little, and his turn was come again. The most experienced men sometimes mistake a woman in this way. The real fact was that Grace, being happy herself, thanks to a daily letter from the man she adored, had not the heart to be unkind to another, whose only fault was loving her, and to whom she feared she had not behaved very well. However, Mr. Coventry did mistake her. He was detained in town, by business ; but he wrote Mr. Carden a charming letter, and proposed formally for his daughter's hand.

Mr. Carden had seen the proposal coming this year and more; so he was not surprised; but he was gratified. The letter was put into his hand while he was dressing for dinner. Of course he did not open the subject before the servants: but, as soon as they had retired, he said "Grace, I want your attention on a matter of importance."

Grace stared a little, but said faintly, "Yes, papa," and all manner of vague maidenly misgivings crowded through her brain.

"My child, you are my only one, and the joy of the house; and need I say I shall feel your loss bitterly whenever your time comes to leave me?"

"Then I never will leave you," cried Grace, and came and wreathed her arms round his neck.

He kissed her, and, parting her hair, looked with parental fondness at her white brow and her deep clear eyes.

"You shall never leave me, for the worse," said he: "but you are sure to marry some day, and therefore it is my duty to look favourably on a downright good match. Well, my dear, such a match offers itself. I have a proposal for you."

"I am sorry to hear it."

"Wait till you hear who it is. It is Mr. Coventry, of Bollinghope."

Grace sighed, and looked very uncomfortable.

“Why, what is the matter? you always used to like him.”

“So I do now; but not for a husband.”

“I see no one to whom I could resign you so willingly. He is well born and connected, has a good estate, not too far from your poor father.”

“Dear papa!”

“He speaks pure English: now these Hillsborough manufacturers, with their provincial twang, are hardly presentable in London society.”

“Dear papa, Mr. Coventry is an accomplished gentleman, who has done me the highest honour he can. You must decline him very politely: but, between ourselves, I am a little angry with him, because he knows I do not love him; and I am afraid he has made this offer to *you*, thinking you might be tempted to constrain my affections: but you won't do that, my own papa, will you? you will not make your child unhappy, who loves you?”

“No, no. I will never let you make an imprudent match; but I won't force you into a good one.”

“And you know I shall never marry without your consent, papa. But I'm only nineteen, and I don't want to be driven away to Bollinghope.”

“And I'm sure I don't want to drive you away any-

where. Mine will be a dull, miserable home without you. Only please tell me what to say to him."

"Oh, I leave that to you. I have often admired the way you soften your refusals. 'Le seigneur Jupiter sait dorer la pillule'—there, that's Molière."

"Well, I suppose I must say——"

"Let me see what *he* says first."

She scanned the letter closely, to see whether there was anything that could point to Henry Little. But there was not a word to indicate he feared a rival, though the letter was anything but presumptuous.

Then Grace coaxed her father, and told him she feared her inexperience had made her indiscreet. She had liked Mr. Coventry's conversation, and perhaps had, inadvertently, given him more encouragement than she intended: would he be a good, kind papa, and get her out of the scrape, as creditably as he could? She relied on his superior wisdom. So then he kissed her, and said he would do his best.

He wrote a kind, smooth letter, gilding and double-gilding the pill. He said, amongst the rest, that there appeared to be no ground of refusal, except a strong disinclination to enter the wedded state. "I believe there is no one she likes as well as you; and, as for myself, I know no gentleman to whom I would so gladly confide my daughter's happiness," &c., &c.

He handed this letter to his daughter to read, but she refused. "I have implicit confidence in you," said she.

Mr. Coventry acknowledged receipt of the letter, thanked Mr. Carden for the kind and feeling way in which he had inflicted the wound, and said that he had a verbal communication to make before he could quite drop the matter; would be down in about a fortnight.

Soon after this Grace dined with Mrs. Little: and, the week after that, Henry contrived to meet her at a ball, and, after waiting patiently some time, he waltzed with her.

This waltz was another era in their love. It was an inspired whirl of two lovers, whose feet hardly felt the ground, and whose hearts bounded and thrilled, and their cheeks glowed, and their eyes shot fire; and when Grace was obliged to stop, because the others stopped, her elastic and tense frame turned supple and soft directly, and she still let her eyes linger on his, and her hand nestle in his a moment: this, and a faint sigh of pleasure and tenderness, revealed how sweet her partner was to her.

Need I say the first waltz was not the last? and that evening they were more in love than ever, if possible.

Mr. Coventry came down from London, and, late that evening, he and Mr. Carden met at the Club.

Mr. Carden found him in an arm-chair, looking careworn and unhappy; and felt quite sorry for him. He hardly knew what to say to him: but Coventry with his usual grace relieved him: he rose, and shook hands, and even pressed Mr. Carden's hand, and held it.

Mr. Carden was so touched, that he pressed his hand in return, "Courage! my poor fellow; the case is not desperate, you know."

Mr. Coventry shook his head, and sat down. Mr. Carden sat down beside him.

"Why, Coventry, it is not as if there was another attachment."

"There *is* another attachment; at least I have too much reason to fear so. But you shall judge for yourself. I have long paid my respectful addresses to Miss Carden, and I may say without vanity that she used to distinguish me beyond her other admirers; I was not the only one who thought so; Mr. Raby has seen us together, and he asked me to meet her at Raby Hall. There I became more particular in my attentions, and those attentions, sir, were well received."

"But were they *understood*? that is the question."

"Understood and received, upon my honour."

“Then she will marry you, soon or late: for I’m sure there is no other man. Grace was never deceitful.”

“All women are deceitful.”

“Oh, come.”

“Let me explain: all women, worthy of the name, are cowards; and cowardice drives them to deceit, even against their will. Pray hear me to an end. On the fifth of last December, I took Miss Carden to the top of Cairnhope hill. I showed her Bollinghope in the valley, and asked her to be its mistress.”

“And what did she say? Yes or no?”

“She made certain faint objections, such as a sweet, modest girl like her makes as a matter of course, and then she yielded.”

“What! consented to be your wife?”

“Not in those very words; but she said she esteemed me, and she knew I loved her; and when I asked her whether I might speak to you, she said ‘Yes.’”

“But that was as good as accepting you.”

“I am glad you agree with me. You know, Mr. Carden, thousands have been accepted in that very form. Well, sir, the next thing was we were caught in that cursed snow-storm.”

“Yes, she has told me all about that.”

“Not all, I suspect. We got separated for a few

minutes, and I found her in an old ruined church, where a sort of blacksmith was working at his forge. I found her, sir, I might say almost in the blacksmith's arms. I thought little of that at first: any man has a right to succour any woman in distress: but, sir, I discovered that Miss Carden and this man were acquaintances: and, by degrees, I found, to my horror, that he had a terrible power over her."

"What do you mean, sir? Do you intend to affront us?"

"No. And, if the truth gives you pain, pray remember it gives me agony. However, I must tell you the man was not what he looked, a mere blacksmith; he is a sort of Proteus, who can take all manner of shapes: at the time I'm speaking of, he was a maker of carving-tools. Well, sir, you could hardly believe the effect of this accidental interview with that man: the next day, when I renewed my addresses, Miss Carden evaded me, and was as cold as she had been kind: she insisted on it she was not engaged to me, and said she would not marry anybody for two years; and this, I am sorry to say, was not her own idea, but this Little's; for I overheard him ask her to wait two years for him."

"Little! What, Raby's new nephew?"

"That is the man."

Mr. Carden was visibly discomposed by this communication. He did not choose to tell Coventry how shocked he was at his own daughter's conduct; but, after a considerable pause, he said, "If what you have told me is the exact truth, I shall interpose parental authority, and she shall keep her engagement with you, in spite of all the Littles in the world."

"Pray do not be harsh," said Coventry.

"No, but I shall be firm."

"Insanity in his family, for one thing," suggested Coventry, scarcely above a whisper.

"That is true; his father committed suicide. But really that consideration is not needed. My daughter must keep her engagements, as I keep mine."

With this understanding the friends parted.

CHAPTER XV.

GRACE happened to have a headache next morning, and did not come down to breakfast; but it was Saturday, and Mr. Carden always lunched at home on that day. So did Grace, because it was one of Little's days. This gave Mr. Carden the opportunity he wanted. When they were alone he fixed his eyes on his daughter, and said quietly, "What is your opinion of—a jilt?"

"A heartless, abominable creature," replied Grace, as glibly as if she was repeating some familiar catechism.

"Would you liked to be called one?"

"Oh, papa!"

"Is there nobody who has the right to apply the term to you?"

"I hope not." (Red.)

"You encouraged Mr. Coventry's addresses?"

"I am afraid I did not discourage them, as I wish I had. It is so hard to foresee everything."

"Pray do you remember the fifth day of last December?"

“ Can I ever forget it ?” (Redder.)

“ Is it true that Mr. Coventry proposed for you that day ?”

“ Yes.”

“ And you accepted him.”

“ No ; no. Then he has told you so ? How ungenerous ! All I did was, I hesitated, and cried, and didn't say ‘ no,’ downright—like a fool. Oh, papa, have pity on me, and save me.” And now she was pale.

Mr. Carden's paternal heart was touched by this appeal, but he was determined to know the whole truth.

“ You could love him, in time, I suppose ?”

“ Never.”

“ Why ?”

“ Because——”

“ Now tell me the truth. Have you another attachment ?”

“ Yes, dear papa.” (In a whisper, and as red as fire.)

“ Somebody of whom you are not proud.”

“ I *am* proud of him. He is Mr. Coventry's superior. He is everybody's superior in everything in the world.”

“ No, Grace, you can hardly be proud of your attachment ; if you had been, you would not have hidden it all this time from your father.” And Mr. Carden sighed.

Grace burst out crying, and flung herself on her knees and clung sobbing to him.

“There, there,” said he, “I don’t want to reproach you ; but to advise you.”

“Oh, papa ! Take and kill me. Do : I want to die.”

“Foolish child ! Be calm now ; and let us talk sense.”

At this moment there was a peculiar ring at the door, a ring not violent, but vigorous.

Grace started, and looked terrified : “Papa !” said she, “say what you like to me, but do not affront *him* ; for you might just as well take that knife and stab your daughter to the heart. I love him so. Have pity on me.”

The servant announced “Mr. Little !”

Grace started up, and stood with her hand gripping the chair ; her cheek was pale, and her eyes glittered ; she looked wild, and evidently strained up to defend her lover.

All this did not escape Mr. Carden. He said gently, “Show him into the library.” Then to Grace, as soon as the servant had retired, “Come here, my child.”

She kneeled at his knees again, and turned her imploring, streaming eyes up to him.

“Is it really so serious as all this?”

“Papa, words cannot tell you how I love him. But, if you affront him, and he leaves me, you will *see* how I love him; you will know, by my grave-side, how I love him.”

“Then I suppose I must swallow my disappointment how I can.”

“It shall be no disappointment: he will do you honour and me too.”

“But he can't make a settlement on his wife, and no man shall marry my daughter till he can do that.”

“We can wait,” said Grace, humbly.

“Yes, wait—till you and your love are both worn out.”

“I shall wear out before my love.”

Mr. Carden looked at her, as she kneeled before him, and his heart was very much softened. “Will you listen to reason at all?” said he.

“From you, I will, dear papa.” She added, swiftly, “And then you will listen to affection, will you not?”

“Yes. Promise me there shall be no formal engagement, and I will let him come now and then.”

This proposal, though not very pleasant, relieved Grace of such terrible fears, that she consented eagerly.

Mr. Carden then kissed her, and rose, to go to young Little; but, before he had taken three steps, she

caught him by the arm, and said, imploringly, "Pray remember while you are speaking to him that you would not have me to bestow on any man but for him; for he saved my life, and Mr. Coventry's too. Mr. Coventry forgets that: but don't you: and, if you wound him, you wound me; he carries my heart in his bosom."

Mr. Carden promised he would do his duty as kindly as possible: and with that Grace was obliged to content herself.

When he opened the library door, young Little started up, his face irradiated with joy. Mr. Carden smiled a little satirically; but he was not altogether untouched by the eloquent love for his daughter, thus showing itself in a very handsome and amiable face. He said, "It is not the daughter this time, sir; it is only the father."

Little coloured up and looked very uneasy.

"Mr. Little, I am told you pay your addresses to Miss Carden. Is that so?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have never given me any intimation."

Little coloured still more. He replied, with some hesitation, "Why, sir, you see I was brought up amongst workmen, and they court the girl first, and make sure of her, before they trouble the parents; and, besides, it was not ripe for your eye yet."

“Why not?”

“Because I’m no match for Miss Carden. But I hope to be, some day.”

“And she is to wait for you till then.”

“She says she will.”

“Well, Mr. Little, this is a delicate matter; but you are a straightforward man, I see, and it is the best way. Now I must do my duty as a parent, and I am afraid I shall not be able to do that without mortifying you a little; but believe me, it is not from any dislike or disrespect to you, but only because it *is* my duty.”

“I’m much obliged to you, sir; and I’ll bear more from you than I would from any other man. You are her father, and I hope you’ll be mine one day.”

“Well then, Mr. Little, I always thought my daughter would marry a gentleman in this neighbourhood, who has paid her great attention for years, and is a very suitable match for her. You are the cause of that match being broken off, and I am disappointed. But, although I am disappointed, I will not be harsh nor unreasonable to you. All I say is this: my daughter shall never marry any man, nor engage herself to any man, who cannot make a proper settlement on her. Can *you* make a proper settlement on her?”

“Not at present,” said Little, with a sigh.

“Then I put it to you, as a man, is it fair of you to

pay her open attentions, and compromise her? You must not think me very mercenary; I am not the man to give my daughter to the highest bidder. But there is a medium."

"I understand you, sir, so far. But what am I to do? Am I to leave off loving, and hoping, and working, and inventing? You might as well tell me to leave off living."

"No, my poor boy; I don't say that, neither. If it is really for her you work, and invent, and struggle with fortune so nobly as I know you do, persevere, and may God speed you. But, meantime, be generous, and don't throw yourself in her way to compromise her."

The young man was overpowered by the kindness and firmness of his senior, who was also Grace's father. He said, in a choking voice, there was no self-denial he would not submit to, if it was understood that he might still love Grace, and might marry her as soon as he could make a proper settlement on her.

Then Mr. Carden, on his part, went further than he had intended, and assented distinctly to all this, provided the delay was not unreasonable in point of time. "I can't have her whole life wasted."

"Give me two years: I'll win her or lose her in that time." He then asked, piteously, if he might see her.

“I am sorry to say No to that,” was the reply; “but she has been already very much agitated, and I should be glad to spare her further emotion. You need not doubt her attachment to you, nor my esteem. You are a very worthy, honest young man, and your conduct does much to reconcile me to what I own is a disappointment.”

Having thus gilded the pill, Mr. Carden shook hands with Henry Little, and conducted him politely to the street-door.

The young man went away slowly; for he was disconsolate at not seeing Grace.

But, when he got home, his stout Anglo-Saxon heart reacted, and he faced the situation.

He went to his mother and told her what had passed. She coloured with indignation, but said nothing.

“Well, mother, of course it might be better; but then it might be worse. It’s my own fault now if I lose her. Cutlery won’t do it in the time, but Invention will: so, from this hour, I’m a practical inventor, and nothing but death shall stop me.”

CHAPTER XVI.

GRACE CARDEN ran to the window, and saw Henry Little go away slowly, and hanging his head. This visible dejection in her manly lover made her heart rise to her throat, and she burst out sobbing and weeping with alarming violence.

Mr. Carden found her in this state, and set himself to soothe her. He told her the understanding he had come to with Mr. Little, and begged her to be as reasonable and as patient as her lover was. But the appeal was not successful. "He came to see me," she cried, "and he has gone away without seeing me. You have begun to break both our hearts, with your reason and your prudence. One comfort, mine will break first; I have not his fortitude. Oh, my poor Henry! He has gone away, hanging his head, broken-hearted: that is what you have *done* for me. After that, what are words? Air—air; and you can't feed hungry hearts with air."

"Well, my child, I am sorry now I did not bring

him in here. But I really did it for the best. I wished to spare you farther agitation."

"Agitation!" And she opened her eyes with astonishment. "Why, it is you who agitate me. He would have soothed me in a moment. One kind and hopeful word from him, one tender glance of his dear eye, one pressure of his dear hard hand, and I could have borne anything; but that drop of comfort you denied us both. Oh, cruel! cruel!"

"Calm yourself, Grace, and remember whom you are speaking to. It was an error in judgment, perhaps—nothing more."

"But, then, if you know nothing about love, and its soothing power, why meddle with it at all?"

"Grace," said Mr. Carden, sadly, but firmly, "we poor parents are all prepared for this. After many years of love and tenderness bestowed on our offspring, the day is sure to come when the young thing we have reared with so much care and tenderness will meet a person of her own age, a *stranger*; and, in a month or two, all our love, our care, our anxiety, our hopes, will be nothing in the balance. This wound is in store for us all. We foresee it; we receive it; we groan under it; we forgive it. We go patiently on, and still give our ungrateful children the benefit of our love and our experience. I have seen in my own family that horrible

mixture, Gentility and Poverty. In our class of life, poverty is not only poverty; it is misery, and meanness as well. My income dies with me. My daughter and her children shall not go back to the misery and meanness out of which I have struggled. They shall be secured against it by law, before she marries, or she shall marry under her father's curse."

Then Grace was frightened, and said she should never marry under her father's curse; but (with a fresh burst of weeping) what need was there to send Henry away without seeing her, and letting them comfort each other under this sudden affliction. "Ah, I was too happy this morning," said the poor girl. "I was singing before breakfast. Jael always told me not to do that. Oh! oh! oh!"

Mr. Carden kept silence; but his fortitude was sorely tried.

That day Grace pleaded headache, and did not appear to dinner. Mr. Carden dined alone, and missed her bright face sadly. He sent his love to her, and went off to the Club, not very happy. At the Club he met Mr. Coventry, and told him frankly what he had done. Mr. Coventry, to his surprise, thanked him warmly. "She will be mine in two years," said he. "Little will never be able to make a settlement on her." This remark set Mr. Carden thinking.

Grace watched the window day after day, but Henry never came nor passed. She went a great deal more than usual into the town, in hopes of meeting him by the purest accident. She longed to call on Mrs. Little, but feminine instinct withheld her; she divined that Mrs. Little must be deeply offended.

She fretted for a sight of Henry, and for an explanation, in which she might clear herself, and show her love, without being in the least disobedient to her father. Now all this was too subtle to be written. So she fretted and pined for a meeting.

While she was in this condition, and losing colour every day, who should call one day—to reconnoitre, I suppose—but Mr. Coventry.

Grace was lying on the sofa, languid and distraite, when he was announced. She sat up directly, and her eye kindled.

Mr. Coventry came in with his usual grace and cat-like step. “Ah, Miss Carden!”

Miss Carden rose majestically to her feet, made him a formal curtsy, and swept out of the room, without deigning him a word. She went to the study, and said, “Papa, here’s a friend of yours—Mr. Coventry.”

“Dear me, I am very busy. I wish you would amuse him for a few minutes till I have finished this letter.”

“Excuse me, papa, I cannot stay in the same room with Mr. Coventry.”

“Why not, pray?”

“He is a dangerous man: he compromises one. He offered me an engagement-ring, and I refused it; yet he made you believe we were engaged. You have taken care I shall not be compromised with the man I love; and shall I be compromised with the man I don't care for? No, thank you.”

“Very well, Grace,” said Mr. Carden, coldly.

Shortly after this Mr. Carden requested Dr. Amboyne to call; he received the Doctor in his study, and told him that he was beginning to be uneasy about Grace; she was losing her appetite, her colour, and her spirits. Should he send her to the sea-side?

“The sea-side! I distrust conventional remedies. Let me see the patient.”

He entered the room and found her colouring a figure she had drawn: it was a beautiful woman, with an anchor at her feet. The door was open, and the Doctor, entering softly, saw a tear fall on the work from a face so pale, and worn with pining, that he could hardly repress a start: he did repress it though, for starts are unprofessional; he shook hands with her in his usual way. “Sorry to hear you are indisposed, my dear Miss Grace.” He then examined her tongue, and felt her

pulse : and then he sat down, right before her, and fixed his eyes on her. How long have you been unwell ?”

“ I am not unwell that I know of,” said Grace, a little sullenly.

“ One reason I ask, I have another patient, who has been attacked somewhat in the same way.”

Grace coloured, and fixed a searching eye on the Doctor. “ Do I know the lady ?”

“ No. For it happens to be a male patient.”

“ Perhaps it is going about.”

“ Possibly : this is the age of competition. Still it is hard you can't have a little malady of this kind all to yourself ; don't you think so ?”

At this Grace laughed hysterically.

“ Come, none of that before me,” said the Doctor sternly.

She stopped directly, frightened. The Doctor smiled.

Mr. Carden peeped in from his study. “ When you have done with her, come and prescribe for me. I am a little out of sorts too.” With this, he retired. “ That means you are to go and tell him what is the matter with me,” said Grace bitterly.

“ Is his curiosity unjustifiable ?”

“ Oh no. Poor papa !” Then she asked him drily if he knew what was the matter with her.

“ I think I do.”

“ Then cure me.” This, with haughty incredulity.

“ I’ll try; and a man can but do his best. I’ll tell you one thing; if I can’t cure you, no doctor in the world can: see how modest I am. Now for papa.”

She let him go to the very door: and then a meek little timid voice said, in a scarce audible murmur, “ Doctor !”

Now when this meek murmur issued from a young lady who had, up to this period of the interview, been rather cold and cutting, the sagacious Doctor smiled. “ My dear ?” said he, in a very gentle voice.

“ Doctor ! about your other patient ?”

“ Well ?”

“ Is he as bad as I am ? For indeed, my dear friend, I feel—my food has no taste—life itself no savour. I used to go singing, now I sit sighing. Is he as bad as I am ?”

“ I’ll tell you the truth: his malady is as strong as yours; but he has the great advantage of being a man; and, again, of being a man of brains. He is a worker, and an inventor; and now, instead of succumbing tamely to his disorder, he is working double tides, and inventing with all his might, in order to remove an obstacle between him and one he loves with all his

manly soul. A contest so noble and so perpetual sustains and fortifies the mind. He is indomitable; only, at times, his heart of steel will soften, and then he has fits of deep dejection and depression, which I mourn to see; for his manly virtues, and his likeness to one I loved deeply in my youth, have made him dear to me."

During this Grace turned her head away, and, ere the Doctor ended, her tears were flowing freely; for to her, being a woman, this portrait of a male struggle with sorrow was far more touching than any description of feminine and unresisted grief could be: and, when the Doctor said he loved his patient, she stole her little hand into his in a way to melt Old Nick, if he is a male. Ladies, forgive the unchivalrous doubt.

"Doctor," said she, affecting all of a sudden a little air of small sprightliness, very small, "now, do—you—think—it would do your patient—the least good in the world—if you were to take him this?"

She handed him her work, and then she blushed divinely.

"Why, it is a figure of Hope."

"Yes."

"I think it might do him a great deal of good."

"You could say I painted it for him."

"So I will. That will do him no harm neither. Shall I say I found you crying over it?"

“ Oh, no! no! That would make him cry too, perhaps.”

“ Ah, I forgot that. Grace, you are an angel.”

“ Ah, no. But you can tell him I am——if you think so. That will do him no great harm——will it?”

“ Not an atom to him; but it will subject me to a pinch for stale news. There, give me my patient’s picture, and let me go.”

She kissed the little picture half-furtively, and gave it him, and let him go; only, as he went out at the door, she murmured, “ Come often.”

Now, when this artful doctor got outside the door his face became grave all of a sudden, for he had seen enough to give him a degree of anxiety he had not betrayed to his interesting patient herself.

“ Well, Doctor?” said Mr. Carden, affecting more cheerfulness than he felt. “ Nothing there beyond your skill, I suppose?”

“ Her health is declining rapidly. Pale, hollow-eyed, listless, languid—not the same girl.”

“ Is it bodily, do you think, or only mental?”

“ Mental as to its cause; but bodily in the result. The two things are connected in all of us, and very closely in Miss Carden. Her organization is fine, and,

therefore, subtle. She is tuned in a high key. Her sensibility is great; and tough folk, like you and me, must begin by putting ourselves in her place before we prescribe for her, otherwise our harsh hands may crush a beautiful, but too tender, flower."

"Good heavens!" said Carden, beginning to be seriously alarmed; "do you mean to say you think, if this goes on, she will be in any danger?"

"Why, if it were to go on at the same rate, it would be very serious. She must have lost a stone in weight already."

"What, my child! my sweet Grace! Is it possible her life?——"

"And do you think your daughter is not mortal like other people? The young girls that are carried past your door to the churchyard one after another, had they no fathers?"

At this blunt speech the father trembled from head to foot.

CHAPTER XVII.

“DOCTOR,” said Mr. Carden, “you are an old friend, and a discreet man; I will confide the truth to you.”

“You may save yourself the trouble. I have watched the whole progress of this amour up to the moment when you gave them the advantage of your paternal wisdom, and made them both miserable.”

“It is very unreasonable of them, to be miserable.”

“Oh, lovers parted could never yet make themselves happy with reason.”

“But why do you say parted? All I said was ‘no engagement till you can make a settlement; and don’t compromise her in the meanwhile.’ I did not mean to interdict occasional visits.”

“Then why not say so? That is so like people. You made your unfavourable stipulation plain enough; but the little bit of comfort, you left that in doubt. This comes of not putting yourself in his place. I have had a talk with him about it, and he thinks he is not

to show his face here till he is rich enough to purchase your daughter of you."

"But I tell you he has misunderstood me."

"Then write to him and say so."

"No, no; you take an opportunity to let him know he has really rather overrated my severity, and that I trust to his honour, and do not object to a visit—say once a week."

"It is a commission I will undertake with pleasure."

"And do you really think that will do her bodily health any good?"

Before Doctor Amboyne could reply, the piano was suddenly touched in the next room, and a sweet voice began to sing a cheerful melody. "Hush!" said Doctor Amboyne. "Surely I know that tune. Yes, I have heard *the other* whistle it."

"She has not sung for ever so long," remarked Mr. Carden.

"And I think I can tell you why she is singing now: look at this picture of Hope; I just told her I had a male patient afflicted with her complaint, and the quick-witted creature asked me directly if I thought this picture would do him any good. I said Yes, and I'd take it to him."

"Come, Doctor, that couldn't make her *sing*."

"Why not? Heart can speak to heart, even by a

flower or a picture. The separation was complete; sending this symbol has broken it a little, and so she is singing. This is a lesson for us ruder and less subtle spirits. Now mind, thwarted love seldom kills a busy man; but it often kills an idle woman, and your daughter is an idle woman. He is an iron pot, she is a china vase. Please don't hit them too hard with the hammer of paternal wisdom, or you will dent my iron pot, and break your china vase to atoms."

Having administered this warning, Doctor Amboyne went straight from Woodbine Villa to Little's factory; but Little was still in London; he had gone there to take out patents. Bayne promised to send the Doctor a line immediately on his return. Nevertheless, a fortnight elapsed, and then Doctor Amboyne received a short mysterious line to tell him Mr. Little had come home, and would be all the better of a visit. On receipt of this the Doctor went at once to the works, and found young Little lying on his carpenter's bench in a sort of gloomy apathy. "Hallo!" said the Doctor, in his cheerful way, "why what's the matter now?"

"I'm fairly crushed," groaned the inventor.

"And what has crushed you?"

"The roundabout swindle."

"There, now, he invents words as well as things. Come, tell me all about the roundabout swindle."

“No, no; I haven't the heart left to go through it all again, even in words. One would think an inventor was the enemy of the human race. Yes, I will tell you; the sight of you has revived me a bit; it always does. Well, then, you know I am driven to invention now; it is my only chance: and, ever since Mr. Carden spoke to me, I have given my whole soul to the best way of saw-grinding by machinery. The circular saws beat me, for a while, but I mastered them: see, there's the model. I'm going to burn it this very afternoon. Well, a month ago, I took the other model—the long-saw grinder—up to London, to patent the invention, as you advised me. I thought I'd just have to exhibit the model, and lodge the description in some Government office, and pay a fee, of course, to some swell, and so be quit of it. Lord bless you—first I had to lay the specification before the Court of Chancery, and write a petition to the Queen, and pay, and, what is worse, wait. When I had paid, and waited, I got my petition signed, not by the Queen, but by some Go-between, and then I must take it to the Attorney-General. He made me pay—and wait. When I had waited ever so long, I was sent back to where I had come from—the Home Office. But even then I could not get to the Queen. Another of her Go-betweens nailed me, and made me pay, and wait: these locusts steal your time as well as your

money. At last, a copy of a copy of a copy of my patent got to the Queen, and she signed it like a lady at once, and I got it back. Then I thought I was all right. Not a bit of it: the Queen's signature wasn't good till another of her Go-betweens had signed it. I think it was the Home Secretary this time. This Go-between bled me again, and sent me, with my hard-earned signatures, to the Patent Office. There they drafted, and copied, and docketed, and robbed me of more time and money. And, when all was done, I had to take the document back to one of the old Go-betweens that I hoped I had worn out—the Attorney-General. He signed, and bled me out of some more money. From him to the other Go-betweens at Whitehall. From them to the Stamp Office, if I remember right, and, oh Lord, didn't I fall among leeches there? They drafted, they copied, they engrossed, they juggled me out of time and money without end. The first leech was called the Lord Keeper of the Seal; the second leech was called the Lord Chancellor; it was some Go-between that acted in his name: the third leech was the Clerk of the Patents. They demanded more copies, and then employed more Go-betweens to charge ten times the value of a copy, and nailed the balance, no doubt. 'Stand and deliver thirty pounds for this stamp.' 'Stand and deliver to me that call myself the Chancellor's purse-

bearer—and there's no such creature—two guineas.' 'Stand and deliver seven, thirteen, to the Clerk of the Hanaper'—and there's no such thing as a Hanaper. 'Stand and deliver three, five,' to a Go-between that calls himself the Lord Chancellor again, and isn't. 'Stand and deliver six, nought, to a Go-between that acts for the deputy, that ought to put a bit of sealing-wax on the patent, but hasn't the brains to do it himself, so you must pay *me* a fancy price for doing it, and then I won't do it; it will be done by a clerk at twenty-five shillings a week.' And, all this time, mind you, no disposition to soften all this official peculation by civility; no misgiving that the next wave of civilization may sweep all these Go-betweens and leeches out of the path of progress; no, the deputy-vice-Go-betweens all scowled, as well as swindled: they broke my heart so, often I sat down in their ante-chambers, and the scalding tears ran down my cheeks, at being pillaged of my time as well as my money, and treated like a criminal—for what? For being, in my small way, a national benefactor."

"Ay," said the Doctor, "you had committed the crime of Brains; and the worse crime of declining to be starved in return for them. I don't rebel against the fees so much: their only fault is that they are too heavy, since the monopoly they profess to secure is short-lived, and yet not very secure; the Lord Chan-

cellor, as a judge, has often to upset the patent which he has sold in another character. But that system of go-betweens, and deputy-go-betweens, and deputy-lieutenant-go-betweens, and of nobody doing his own business in matters of State, it really is a national curse, and a great blot upon the national intellect. It is a disease; so let us name it. We doctors are great at naming diseases; greater than at curing them.

Let us call it VICARIA,
This English malaria.

Of this Vicaria, the loss of time and money you have suffered is only one of the fruits, I think."

"All I know is, they made my life hell for more than a month; and if I have ever the misfortune to invent anything more, I'll keep it to myself. I'll hide it, like any other crime. But no; I never will invent another thing: never, never."

"Stuff! Methinks I hear a duck abjure natation. You can't help inventing."

"I will help it. What, do you think I'll be such an ass as to have Brains in a country where Brains are a crime? Doctor, I'm in despair."

"Then it is time to cast your eyes over this little picture."

The inventor turned the little picture listlessly

about. "It is a woman, with an anchor. It's a figure of Hope."

"Beautifully painted, is it not?"

"The tints are well laid on: but, if you'll excuse me, it is rather flat." He laid the picture down, and turned away from it. "Ah, Hope, my lass, you've come to the wrong shop."

"Not she. She was painted expressly for you, and by a very beautiful girl."

"Oh, Doctor, not by——"

"Yes; she sends it you."

"Ah!" And he caught Hope up, and began to devour her with kisses, and his eyes sparkled finely.

"I have some good news, too, for you. Mr. Carden tells me he never intended to separate you entirely from his daughter. If you can be moderate, discreet, old before your time, etc., and come only about once a week, and not compromise her publicly, you will be as welcome as ever."

"That is good news, indeed. I'll go there this very day; and I'll patent the circular saw."

"There's a non-sequitur for you!"

"Nothing of the kind, sir. Why, even the Queen's Go-betweens will never daunt me, now I can go and drink love and courage direct from *her* eyes; nothing

can chill nor discourage me now. I'll light my forge again, and go to work, and make a few sets of carving-tools, and that will pay the Go-betweens for patenting my circular saw-grinder. But first I'll put on my coat and go to heaven."

"Had you not better postpone that till the end of your brilliant career as an inventor and a lover?"

"No; I thirst for heaven, and I'll drink it." So he made his toilet, thanked and blessed the good Doctor, and off to Woodbine Villa.

Grace Carden saw him coming, and opened the door to him herself, red as scarlet, and her eyes swimming. She scarcely made an effort to contain herself this time, and when she got him into the drawing-room all to herself, she cried, for joy and tenderness, on his shoulder; and it cost him a gulp or two, I can tell you: and they sat hand in hand, and were never tired of gazing at each other: and the hours flew by unheeded. All their trouble was as though it had never been. Love brightened the present, the future, and even the past. He did not tell Grace one word of what he had suffered from Vicaria—I thank thee, Doctor, for teaching me that word—it had lost all interest to him. Love and happiness had annihilated its true character—like the afternoon sun gilding a far-off pigsty.

He did mention the subject, however, but it was in

these terms: "And, dearest, I'm hard at work inventing, and I patent all my inventions; so I hope to satisfy your father before two years."

And Grace said, "Yes, but don't overwork your poor brain, and worry yourself. I am yours in heart, and that is something, I hope. I know it is to me; I wouldn't change with any wife in Christendom."

CHAPTER XVIII.

AT the end of two months the situation of affairs was as follows :—

Grace Carden received a visit every week from Henry, and met him now and then at other houses: she recovered her health and spirits, and, being of a patient sex, was quite contented, and even happy. Frederick Coventry visited her often, and she received his visits quite graciously, now that the man she loved was no longer driven from her. She even pitied him, and was kind to him, and had misgivings that she had used him ill. This feeling he fostered, by a tender, dejected, and inoffensive manner. Boiling with rage inside, this consummate actor had the art to feign resignation; whereas, in reality, he was secretly watching for an opportunity to injure his rival. But no such opportunity came.

Little, in humble imitation of his sovereign, had employed a Go-between to employ a Go-between, to deal with the state Go-betweens and deputy Go-betweens,

that hampered the purchase—the word “grant” is out of place, bleeding is no boon—of a patent from the crown, and by this means he had done, in sixty days, what a true inventor will do in twenty-four hours, whenever the various metallic ages shall be succeeded by the age of reason; he had secured his two saw-grinding inventions, by patent, in Great Britain, the Canadas, and the United States of America. He had another invention perfected: it was for forging axes and hatchets by machinery: but this he did not patent: he hoped to find his remuneration in the prior use of it for a few months. Mere priority is sometimes of great advantage in this class of invention, and there are no fees to pay for it, nor deputy-lieutenant-vice-Go-between’s ante-chambers, for genius to cool its heels and heart in.

But one thing soon became evident. He could not work his inventions without a much larger capital.

Dr. Amboyne and he put their heads together over this difficulty, and the Doctor advised him in a more erudite style than usual.

“True invention,” said he, “whether literary or mechanical, is the highest and hardest effort of the mind. It is an operation so absorbing, that it often weakens those pettier talents, which make what we call the clever man. Therefore the inventor should ally himself with some person of talent and energy, but no

invention. Thus supported, he can have his fits of abstraction, his headaches, his heart-aches, his exultations, his depressions, and no harm done; his dogged associate will plough steadily on all the time. So, after all, your requiring capital is no great misfortune; you must look out for a working capitalist. No sleeping partner will serve your turn; what you want is a good, rich, vulgar, energetic man, the pachydermatouser the better."

Henry acted on this advice, and went to London in search of a moneyed partner. Oh, then it was he learned—

The hell it is in suing long to bide.

He found capitalists particularly averse to speculate in a patent. It took him many days to find out what moneyed men were open to that sort of thing at all; and, when he got to them, they were cold. They had all been recently bitten by hare-brained inventors.

Then he represented that it was a matter of judgment, and offered to prove by figures that his saw-grinding machines must return three hundred per cent. Those he applied to would not take the trouble to study his figures. In other words he came at the wrong time. And the wrong time is as bad as the wrong thing, or worse. Take a note of that please: and then forget it.

At last he gave up London in despair, and started for Birmingham.

The train stopped at Tring, and, as it was going on again, a man ran towards the third-class carriage Little was seated in. One of the servants of the company tried to stop him, very properly. He struggled with that official, and eventually shook him off. Meantime the train was accelerating its pace. In spite of that, this personage made a run and a bound, and, half leaping, half scrambling, got his head and shoulders over the door, and there oscillated, till Little grabbed him with both hands, and drew him powerfully in, and admonished him. "That is a fool-hardy trick, sir, begging your pardon."

"Young man," panted the invader, "do you know who you're a-speaking to?"

"No. The Emperor of China?"

"No such trash; it's Ben Bolt, a man that's bad to beat."

"Well, you'll get beat some day, if you go jumping in and out of trains in motion."

"A many have been killed that way," suggested a huge woman in the corner, with the meekest and most timid voice imaginable.

Mr. Bolt eyed the speaker with a humorous glance. "Well, if I'm ever killed that way, I'll

send you a letter by the post. Got a sweetheart, ma'am?"

"I've got a good husband, sir," said she, with mild dignity, and pointed to a thin, sour personage opposite, with his nose in a newspaper. Deep in some public question, he ignored this little private inquiry.

"That's unlucky," said Bolt, "for here am I, just landed from Victoria, and money in both pockets. And where do you think I am going now? to Chester, to see my father and mother, and show them I was right after all. They wanted me to go to school: I wouldn't. Leathered me; I howled, but wouldn't spell; I was always bad to beat. Next thing was, they wanted to make a tanner of me. I wouldn't. 'Give me fifty pounds and let me try the world,' says I. *They* wouldn't. We quarrelled. My uncle interferred one day, and gave me fifty pounds. 'Go to the devil,' said he, 'if you like; so as you don't come back.' I went to Sydney, and doubled my fifty; got a sheep-run, and turned my hundred into a thousand. Then they found gold, and that brought up a dozen ways of making money, all of 'em better than digging. Why, ma'am, I made ten thousand pounds by selling the beastliest lemonade you ever tasted for gold-dust at the mines. That was a good swop, wasn't it? So now I'm come home to see if I can stand the old country and its ways;

and I'm going to see the old folk. I haven't heard a word about them this twenty years."

"Oh, dear, sir," said the meek woman, "twenty years is a long time. I hope you won't find them dead an' buried."

"Don't say that; don't say that!" And the tough, rough man showed a grain of feeling. He soon recovered himself, though, and said more obstreperously than ever, "If they are, I disown 'em. None of your faint-hearted people for me. I despise a chap that gives in before eighty. I'm Ben Bolt, that is bad to beat. Death himself isn't going to bowl me out till I've had my innings."

"La, sir; pray don't talk so, or you'll anger them above, and ten to one upset the train."

"That's one for me, and two for yourself, ma'am."

"Yes, sir," said the mild soul. "I have got my husband with me, and you are only a bachelor, sir."

"How d'ye know that?"

"I think you'd ha' been softened down a bit, if you'd ever had a good wife."

"Oh, it is because I speak loud. That is with bawling to my shepherds half a mile off. Why, if I'm loud, I'm civil. Now, young man, what is *your* trouble?"

Henry started from his reverie, and looked astonished.

“Out with it,” shouted Mr. Bolt; “don’t set grizzling there. What with this lady’s husband, dead and buried in that there newspaper, and you, that sets brooding like a hen over one egg, it’s a Quaker’s meeting, or nearly. If you’ve been and murdered anybody, tell us all about it. Once off your mind you’ll be more sociable.”

“A man’s thoughts are his own, Mr. Bolt. I’m not so fond of talking about myself as you seem to be.”

“Oh, I can talk, or I can listen. But you won’t do neither. Pretty company *you* are, a hatching of your egg.”

“Well, sir,” said the meek woman to Henry, “the rough gentleman he is right. If you are in trouble, the best way is to let your tongue put it off your heart.”

“I’m sure you are very kind,” said Henry, “but really my trouble is one of those out-of-the-way things that do not interest people. However, the long and the short is, I’m an inventor. I have invented several things, and kept them dark, and they have paid me. I live at Hillsborough. But now I have found a way of grinding long saws and circular saws by machinery, at a saving of five hundred per cent. labour. That saving of labour represents an enormous profit—a

large fortune ; so I have patented the invention, at my own expense. But I can't work it without a capitalist. Well, I have ransacked London, and all the moneyed men shy me. The fools will go into railways, and bubbles, and a lot of things that are blind chance, but they won't even study my drawings and figures, and I've made it clear enough too."

"I'm not of their mind, then," said Bolt. "My rule is never to let another man work my money. No railway shares nor gold mines for Ben Bolt. My money goes with me, and I goes with my money."

"Then you are a man of sense ; and I only wish you had money enough to go into this with me."

"How do you know how much money I've got ? You show me how to turn twenty thousand into forty thousand, or forty thousand into eighty thousand, and I'll soon find the money."

"Oh, I could show you how to turn fifteen thousand into fifty thousand." He then unlocked his black bag, and showed Bolt some drawings that represented the grinders by hand at work on long saws and circular saws. "This," said he, "is the present system." He then pointed out its defects. "And this," said he, "is what I propose to substitute." Then he showed him drawings of his machines at work. "And these figures represent the saving in labour. Now, in this branch

of cutlery, the labour is the manufacturer's main expense. Make ten men grind what fifty used, you put forty workmen's wages in your pocket."

"That's tall talk."

"Not an inch taller than the truth."

Mr. Bolt studied the drawings, and, from obstreperous, became quite quiet and absorbed. Presently he asked Henry to change places with him; and, on this being complied with, he asked the meek woman to read him Henry's figures slowly. She stared, but complied. Mr. Bolt pondered the figures, and examined the drawings again. He then put a number of questions to Henry, some of them very shrewd: and, at last, got so interested in the affair, that he would talk of nothing else.

As the train slackened for Birmingham, he said to Henry, "I'm no great scholar; I like to see things in the body. On we go to Hillsborough."

"But I want to talk to a capitalist or two at Birmingham."

"That is not fair; I've got the refusal."

"The deuce you have!"

"Yes, I've gone into it with you; and the others wouldn't listen. Said so yourself."

"Well, but, Mr. Bolt, are you really in earnest? Surely this is quite out of your line?"

“How can it be out of my line if it pays? I’ve bought and sold sheep, and wool, and land, and water, and houses, and tents, and old clothes, and coffee, and tobacco, and cabs. And swopped—my eye, how I have swopped! I’ve swopped a housemaid under articles for a pew in the church, and a milch cow for a whale that wasn’t even killed yet; I paid for the chance. I’m at all in the ring, and devilish bad to beat. Here goes—high, low, Jack, and the game.”

“Did you ever deal in small beer?” asked Henry, satirically.

“No,” said Bolt, innocently. “But I would in a minute if I saw clear to the nimble shilling. Well, will you come on to Hillsborough and settle this? I’ve got the refusal for twenty-four hours I consider.”

“Oh, if you think so, I will go on to Hillsborough. But you said you were going to see your parents, after twenty years’ absence and silence.”

“So I am; but they can keep: what signifies a day or two more after twenty years?” He added, rather severely, as one whose superior age entitled him to play the monitor, “Young man, I never make a toil of a pleasure.”

“No more do I. But how does that apply to visiting your parents?”

“If I was to neglect business to gratify my feelings,

I should be grizzling all the time ; and wouldn't that be making a toil of a pleasure ?”

Henry could only grin in reply to this beautiful piece of reasoning ; and that same afternoon the pair were in Hillsborough, and Mr. Bolt, under Henry's guidance, inspected the grinding of heavy saws, both long and circular. He noted, at Henry's request, the heavy, dirty labour. He then mounted to the studio, and there Henry lectured on his models, and showed them working. Bolt took it all in, his eye flashed, and then he put on, for the first time, the coldness of the practised dealer. “It would take a good deal of money to work this property,” said he, shaking his head.

“It has taken a good deal of brains to invent it.”

“No doubt, no doubt. Well, if you want me to join you, it must be on suitable terms. Money is tight.”

“Well, propose your own terms.”

“That's not my way. I'll think it over before I put my hand to paper. Give me till to-morrow.”

“Certainly.”

On this Mr. Bolt went off as if he had been shot.

He returned next day, and laid before Henry an agreement drawn by the sharpest attorney in Hillsborough, and written in a clerk's hand. “There,” said he, briskly, “you sign that, and I'll make my mark, and at it we go.”

“Stop a bit,” said Henry. “You’ve been to a lawyer, have you? Then I must go to one too; fair play’s a jewel.”

Bolt looked disappointed; but the next moment he affected cheerfulness, and said, “That is fair. Take it to your lawyer directly.”

“I will,” said Henry; but, instead of a lawyer, he took it to his friend Doctor Amboyne, told him all about Ben Bolt, and begged his advice on the agreement. “Ought he to have the lion’s share like this?”

“The moneyed man generally takes that. No commodity is sold so far beyond its value as money. Let me read it.”

The purport of the agreement was as follows:—New premises to be built by Bolt, a portion of the building to be constructed so that it could be easily watched night and day, and in that part the patent saw-grinding machines to be worked. The expenses of this building to be paid off by degrees out of the gross receipts, and meanwhile Mr. Bolt was to receive five per cent. interest for his outlay and two-thirds of the profits, if any. Mr. Little to dispose of his present factory, and confine his patents to the joint operation.

Dr. Amboyne, on mature consideration, advised Little to submit to all the conditions, except the clause confining his operations and his patents. They just

drew their pen through that clause, and sent the amended agreement to Bolt's hotel. He demurred to the amendment; but Henry stood firm, and proposed a conference of four. This took place at Dr. Amboyne's house, and, at last, the agreement was thus modified: the use of the patents in Hillsborough to be confined to the firm of Bolt and Little; but Little to be free to sell them, or work them, in any other town, and also free, in Hillsborough, to grind saws by hand, or do any other established operation of cutlery.

The parties signed; and Bolt went to work in earnest. With all his resolution, he did not lack prudence. He went into the suburbs for his site, and bought a large piece of ground. He advertised for contracts and plans, and brought them all to Henry, and profited by his practical remarks.

He warned the builders it must be a fortress, as well as a factory; but, at Henry's particular request, he withheld the precise reason. "I'm not to be rattened," said he. "I mean to stop that little game. I'm Ben Bolt, that's bad to beat."

At last the tender of Mr. White was accepted, and, as Mr. Bolt, experienced in the delays of builders, tied him tight as to time, he, on his part, made a prompt and stringent contract with Messrs. Whitbread, the brickmakers, and began to dig the foundations.

All this Henry communicated to Grace, and was in high spirits over it, and then so was she. He had a beautiful frame made for the little picture she had given him, and hung it up in his studio. It became the presiding genius, and indeed the animating spirit, of his life.

Both to him and Grace the bright and hopeful period of their love had come at last. Even Bolt contributed something to Little's happiness. The man, hard as he was in business, was not without a certain rough geniality; and then he was so brisk and bustling. His exuberant energy pleased the inventor, and formed an agreeable relief to his reveries and deep fits of study.

The prospect was bright, and the air sunny. In the midst of all which there rose in the horizon a cloud, like that seen by Elijah's servant, a cloud no bigger than a man's hand.

Bolt burst into the studio one day, like a shell, and, like a shell, exploded.

"Here's a pretty go! We are all at a standstill. The brickmakers have struck."

"Why, what is the matter?"

"Fourpence. Young Whitbread, our brickmaker's son, is like you—a bit of an inventor: he altered the shape of the bricks, to fit a small hand-machine, and Whitbread reckoned to save tenpence a thousand. The

brickmakers objected directly. Whitbreads didn't want a row, so they offered to share the profit. The men sent two of their orators to parley: I was standing by Whitbread when they came up; you should have heard 'em; anybody would have sworn the servants were masters, and the masters negro slaves. When the servants had hector'd a bit, the masters, meek and mild, said they would give them sixpence out of the tenpence sooner than they should feel dissatisfied. No; that wouldn't do. 'Well, then,' says young Whitbread, 'are you agreed what will do?' 'Well,' said one of the servants, '*we will allow you to make the bricks, if you give us the tenpence.*'"

"That was cool," said Henry. "To be sure, all brainless beggars try to starve invention."

"Yes, my man; and you grumbled at my taking two-thirds. Labour is harder on you inventors than capital is, you see. Well, I told 'em I wondered at their cheek; but the old man stopp'd me, and spoke quite mild: says he, 'You are too hard on us; we ought to gain a trifle by our own improvement; if it had come from you, we should pay you for it;' and he should stand by his offer of sixpence. So then the men told them it would be the worse for them, and the old gentleman gave a bit of a sigh, and said he couldn't help that; he must live in the trade, or leave it, he didn't

much care which. Next morning they all struck work, and there we are—stopped.”

“Well,” said Henry, “it is provoking; but you mustn’t ask me to meddle. It’s your business.”

“It is, and I’ll show you I’m bad to beat.” With this doughty resolve he went off and drove the contractors: they drove the brickmakers, and the brickmakers got fresh hands from a distance, and the promise of some more.

Bolt rubbed his hands, and kept popping into the yard to see how they got on. By this means he witnessed an incident familiar to brickmakers in that district, but new to him. Suddenly loud cries of pain were heard, and two of the brickmakers held up hands covered with blood, and transfixed by needles. Some ruffian had filled the clay with needles. The sufferers were both disabled, and one went to the hospital. Tempered clay enough to make two hundred thousand bricks had been needled, and had to be cleared away at a loss of time and material.

Bolt went and told Henry, and it only worried him; he could do nothing. Bolt went and hired a watchman and a dog, at his own expense. The dog was shot dead one dark night, and the watchman’s box turned over and sat upon, watchman included, while the confederates trampled fifty thousand raw bricks into a shapeless mass.

The brickmasters, however, stood firm, and at last four of the old hands returned to him, and accepted the sixpence profit due to the master's invention. These four were contribution men, that is to say they paid the Union a shilling per week for permission to make bricks; but this weekly payment was merely a sort of blackmail, it entitled them to no relief from the Union when out of work: so a three-weeks' strike brought them to starvation, and they could co-operate no longer with the genuine Union men, who were relieved from the box all this time. Nevertheless, though their poverty, and not their will, brought them back to work, they were all threatened, and found themselves in a position that merits the sympathy of all men, especially of the very poor. Starvation on one side, sanguinary threats on the other, from an Union which abandoned them in their need, yet expected them to stick by it and starve. In short, the said Union was no pupil of Amboyne; could not put itself in the place of these hungry men, and realize their dilemma; it could only see the situation from its own point of view. From that intellectual defect sprang a crime. On a certain dark night, Thomas Wilde, one of these contribution men, was burning bricks all by himself, when a body of seven men came crawling up to within a little distance. These men were what they call "victims," *i. e.*, men on strike, and receiving pay from the box.

Now, when a man stands against the fire of a kiln, he cannot see many yards from him; so five of the "victims" stood waiting, and sent two forward. These two came up to Wilde, and asked him a favour. "Eh, mister, can you let me and my mate lie down for an hour by your fire?"

"You are welcome," said honest Wild. He then turned to break a piece of coal, and instantly one of those who had accepted his hospitality struck him on the back of the head, and the other five rushed in, and they all set on him, and hit him with cartlegs, and kicked him with their heavy shoes. Overpowered as he was, he struggled away from them, groaning and bleeding, and got to a shed about thirty yards off. But these relentless men, after a moment's hesitation, followed him, and rained blows and kicks on him again, till he gave himself up for dead. He cried out in his despair, "Lord, have mercy on me; they have finished me," and fainted away in a pool of his own blood. But, just before he became insensible, he heard a voice say, "Thou'll burn no more bricks." Then the "victims" retired, leaving this great criminal for dead.

After a long while he came to himself, and found his arm was broken, and his body covered with cuts and bruises. His house was scarcely a furlong distant, yet he was an hour crawling to it. His room was up a

short stair of ten steps. The steps beat him : he leaned on the rail at the bottom, and called out piteously, " My wife ! my wife ! my wife ! " three times.

Mrs. Wilde ran down to him, and caught hold of his hand, and said, " Whatever is to do ? "

When she took his hand the pain made him groan, and she felt something drip on to her hand. It was blood from his wounded arm. Then she was terrified, and, strong with excitement, she managed to get him into the house and lay him on the floor. She asked him, had he fallen off the kiln ? He tried to reply, but could not, and fainted again. This time he was insensible for several hours. In the morning he came to, and told his cruel story to Whitbread, Bolt, and others. Bolt and Whitbread took it most to heart. Bolt went to Mr. Ransome, and put the case in his hands.

Ransome made this remark :—" Ah, you are a stranger, sir. The folks hereabouts never come to us in these Union cases. I'll attend to it, trust me."

Bolt went with this tragedy to Henry, and it worried him ; but he could do nothing. " Mr. Bolt," said he, " I think you are making your own difficulties. Why quarrel with the Brickmakers' Union ? Surely that is superfluous."

" Why, it is them that quarrelled with me ; and I'm

Ben Bolt that is bad to beat." He armed himself with gun and revolver, and watched the Whitbreads' yard himself at night.

Two days after this, young Whitbread's wife received an anonymous letter, advising her, as a friend, to avert the impending fate of her husband, by persuading him to dismiss the police and take back his Hands. The letter concluded with this sentence, "He is generally respected; but we have come to a determination to shoot him."

Young Whitbread took no apparent notice of this, and, soon afterwards, the secretary of the Union proposed a conference. Bolt got wind of this, and was there when the orators came. The deputation arrived, and, after a very short preamble, offered to take the sixpence.

"Why," said Bolt, "you must be joking. Those are the terms poor Wild came back on, and you have hashed him for it."

Old Whitbread looked the men in the face, and said, gravely, "You are too late. You have shed that poor man's blood, and you have sent an anonymous letter to my son's wife. That lady has gone on her knees to us to leave the trade, and we have consented. Fifteen years ago, your Union wrote letters of this kind to my wife (she was pregnant at the time), and drove her into

her grave, with fright and anxiety for her husband. You shall not kill Tom's wife as well. The trade is a poor one at best, thanks to the way you have ground your employers down, and, when you add to that needling our clay, and burning our gear, and beating our servants to death's door, and driving our wives into the grave, we bid you good-by. Mr. Bolt, I'm the sixth brickmaster this Union has driven out of the trade by outrages during the last ten years."

"Thou's a wrong-headed old chap," said the Brick-makers' spokesman: "but thou carn't run away with place. Them as take it will have to take us on."

"Not so. We have sold our plant to the Barton Machine Brickmaking Company; and you maltreated them so at starting that now they won't let a single Union man set his foot on their premises."

The company in question made bricks better and cheaper than any other brickmaster; but, making them by machinery, were *always* at war with the Brickmakers' Union, and, whenever a good chance occurred for destroying their property, it was done. They, on their part, diminished those chances greatly by setting up their works five miles from the town, and by keeping armed watchmen and police. Only these ran away with their profits.

Now, when this company came so near the town,

and proceeded to work up Whitbread's clay, in execution of the contract with which their purchase saddled them, the Brickmakers' Union held a great meeting, in which full a hundred brickmakers took part, and passed extraordinary resolutions, and voted extraordinary sums of money, and recorded both in their books. These books were subsequently destroyed, for a reason the reader can easily divine who has read this narrative with his understanding.

Soon after that meeting, one Kay, a bricklayer, who was never seen to make a brick, for the best of all reasons, he lived by blood alone, was observed reconnoitring the premises, and that very night a quantity of barrows, utensils, and tools, were heaped together, naptha poured over them, and the whole set on fire.

Another dark night, twenty thousand bricks were trampled so noiselessly that the perpetrators were neither seen nor heard.

But Bolt hired more men, put up a notice he would shoot any intruder dead, and so frightened them by his blustering that they kept away, being cowards at bottom, and the bricks were rapidly made, and burnt, and some were even delivered: these bricks were carted from the yard to the building-site by one Harris, who had nothing to do with the quarrel; he was a carter by profession, and wheeled bricks for all the world.

One night this poor man's haystack and stable were all in flames in a moment, and unearthly screams issued from the latter.

The man ran out, half-naked, and his first thought was to save his good grey mare from the fire. But this act of humanity had been foreseen and provided against. The miscreants had crept into the stable, and tied the poor docile beast fast by the head to the rack; then fired the straw. Her screams were such as no man knew a horse could utter. They pierced all hearts, however hard, till her burnt body burst the burnt cords, and all fell together. Man could not aid her. But God can avenge her.

As if the poor thing could tell whether she was drawing machine-made bricks, or hand-made bricks!

The incident is painful to relate; but it would be unjust to omit. It was characteristic of that particular Union; and, indeed, without it my reader could not possibly appreciate the brickmaking mind at its just value.

Bolt went off with this to Little; but Amboyne was there, and cut his tale short. "I hope," said he, "that the common Creator of the four-legged animal and the two-legged beasts will see justice done between them; but you must not come here tormenting my inventor with these horrors. Your business is to relieve him of all such worries, and let him invent in peace."

“ Yes,” said Little, “ and I have told Mr. Bolt we can’t avoid a difficulty with the cutlers. But the brick-makers, what madness to go and quarrel with them ! I will have nothing to do with it, Mr. Bolt.”

“ The cutlers ! Oh, I don’t mind them,” said Bolt. “ They are angels compared with the brickmakers. The cutlers don’t poison cows, and hamstring horses, and tie them to fire ; the cutlers don’t fling little boys into water-pits, and knock down little girls with their fists, just because their fathers are non-Union men ; the cutlers don’t strew poisoned apples and oranges about, to destroy whole families like rats. Why, sir, I have talked with a man the brickmakers tried to throw into boiling lime ; and another they tried to poison with beer, and, when he wouldn’t drink it, threw vitriol in his eyes, and he’s blind of an eye to this day. There’s full half-a-dozen have had bottles of gunpowder and old nails flung into their rooms, with lighted fuses, where they were sleeping with their families ; they call that ‘ bottling a man : ’ it’s a familiar phrase. I’ve seen three cripples crawling about that have been set on by numbers and spoiled for life, and as many fired at in the dark ; one has got a slug in his head to this day. And, with all that, the greatest cowards in the world—daren’t face a man in daylight, any two of them ; but I’ve seen the woman they knocked down with their

fists, and her daughter too, a mere child at the time. No, the cutlers are men, but the brickmakers are beasts."

"All the more reason for avoiding silly quarrels with the brickmakers," said Little.

Thus snubbed, Mr. Bolt retired, muttering something about "bad to beat." He found Harris crying over the ashes of his mare, and the man refused to wheel any more machine-made bricks. Other carters, being applied to, refused also. They had received written warning, and dared not wheel one of those bricks for their lives.

The invincible Bolt bought a cart and a horse, hired two strangers, armed them and himself with revolvers, and carted the bricks himself. Five brickmakers way-laid him in a narrow lane; he took out his revolver, and told them he'd send them all to hell if one laid a finger on him: at this rude observation they fled like sheep.

The invincible carted his bricks by day, and at night rode the horse away to an obscure inn, and slept beside him, armed to the teeth.

The result of all which was that one day he burst into Little's studio shouting "Victory!" and told him two hundred thousand bricks were on the premises, and twenty bricklayers would be at work on the foundations that afternoon.

Henry Little was much pleased at that, and when Bolt told him how he had carted the bricks in person, said, "You are the man for me; you really are bad to beat."

While they were congratulating each other on this hard-earned victory, Mr. Bayne entered softly, and said, "Mr. White—to speak to Mr. Bolt."

"That is the builder," said Bolt. "Show him up."

Mr. White came in with a long face.

"Bad news, gentleman; the Machine Brickmaking Company retires from business, driven out of trade by their repeated losses from violence."

"All the worse for the nation," said Bolt: "houses are a fancy article, got to be. But it doesn't matter to us. We have got bricks enough to go on with."

"Plenty, sir: but that is not where the shoe pinches now. The Brickmakers' Union has made it right with the Bricklayers' Union, and the Bricklayers' Union orders us to cart back every one of those machine-made bricks to the yard."

"See them —— first," said Bolt.

"Well, sir, have you considered the alternative?"

"Not I. What is it?"

"Not a bricklayer in Hillsboro', or for fifty miles round, will set a brick for us: and if we get men from a distance they will be talked away, or driven away,

directly. The place is picketed on every side at this moment."

Even Bolt was staggered now. "What's is to be done, I wonder?"

"There's nothing to be done, but submit. When two such powerful unions amalgamate, resistance is useless, and the law of the land a dead letter. Mr. Bolt, I'm not a rich man; I've got a large family; let me beg of you to release me from the contract."

"White, you are a cur. Release you? never!"

"Then, sir, I'll go through the court, and release myself."

Henry Little was much dejected by this monstrous and unforeseen obstacle arising at the very threshold of his hopes. He felt so sad, that he determined to revive himself with a sight of Grace Carden. He pined for her face and voice. So he went up to Woodbine Villa, though it was not his day. As he drew near that Paradise, the door opened, and Mr. Frederick Coventry came out. The two men nearly met at the gate. The rejected lover came out, looking bright and happy, and saw the accepted lover arrive, looking depressed and careworn: he saw in a moment something was going wrong, and turned on his heel with a glance of triumph.

Henry Little caught that glance, and stood at the gate black with rage. He stood there about a minute, and then walked slowly home again: he felt he should quarrel with Grace if he went in, and, by a violent effort of self-restraint, he retraced his steps; but he went home sick at heart.

The mother's eye read his worn face in a moment, and soon she had it all out of him. It cost her a struggle not to vent her maternal spleen on Grace; but she knew that would only make her son more unhappy. She advised him minutely what to say to the young lady about Mr. Coventry: and, as to the other matters, she said, "You have found Mr. Bolt not so bad to beat as he tells you: for he is beaten, and there's an end of him. Now let *me* try."

"Why what on earth can you do in a case of this kind?"

"Have I ever failed, when you have accepted my assistance?"

"No: that's true. Well, I shall be glad of your assistance now, heaven knows; only I can't imagine——"

"Never mind: will you take Grace Carden if I throw her into your arms?"

"Oh, mother, can you ask me?"

Mrs. Little rang the bell, and ordered a fly. Henry offered to accompany her. She declined. "Go to bed

early," said she, "and trust to your mother. We are harder to beat sometimes than a good many Mr. Bolts."

She drove to Dr. Amboyne's house, and sent in her name. She was ushered into the Doctor's study, and found him shivering over an enormous fire. "Influenza."

"Oh dear," said she, "I'm afraid you are very ill."

"Never mind that. Sit down. You will not make me any worse, you may be sure of that." And he smiled affectionately on her.

"But I came to intrude my own troubles on you."

"All the better. That will help me forget mine."

Mrs. Little seated herself, and, after a slight hesitation, opened her battery thus:—"Well, my good friend, I am come to ask you a favour. It is to try and reconcile my brother and me. If any one can do it, you can."

"Praise the method, not the man. If one could only persuade you to put yourself in his place, and him to put himself in yours, you would be both reconciled in five minutes."

"You forget we have been estranged this five-and-twenty years."

"No, I don't. The only question is, whether you can and will deviate from the practice of the world into an obese lunatic's system, both of you."

“ Try *me* to begin.”

The Doctor's eyes sparkled with satisfaction. “ Well, then,” said he, “ first you must recollect all the differences you have seen between the male and female mind, and imagine yourself a man.”

“ Oh, dear ! that is so hard. But I have studied Henry. Well, there — I have unsexed myself — in imagination.”

“ You are not only a man but a single-minded man, with a high and clear sense of obligation. You are a trustee, bound by honour to protect the interests of a certain woman and a certain child. The lady, under influence, wishes to borrow her son's money, and risk it on rotten security. You decline, and the lady's husband affronts you. In spite of that affront, being a high-minded man, not to be warped by petty irritation, you hurry to your lawyers to get two thousand pounds of your own, for the man who had affronted you.”

“ Is that so ? ” said Mrs. Little. “ I was not aware of that.”

“ I have just learned it, accidentally, from the son of the solicitor Raby went to that fatal night.”

A tear stole down Mrs. Little's cheek.

“ Now, remember, you are not a woman, but a brave high-minded man. In that character you pity poor Mr. Little, but you blame him a little because he fled

from trouble, and left his wife and child in it. To you, who are Guy Raby—mind that, please—it seems egotistical and weak to desert your wife and child even for the grave.” (The widow buried her face and wept. Twenty-five years do something to withdraw the veil the heart has cast over the judgment.) “But, whatever you feel, you utter only regret, and open your arms to your sister. She writes back in an agony, for which, being a man, you cannot make all the allowance you would if you were a woman, and denounces you as her husband’s murderer, and bids you speak to her and write to her no more, and with that she goes to the Littles. Can you blame yourself that, after all this, you wait for her to review your conduct more soberly, and to invite a reconciliation?”

Mrs. Little gave Doctor Amboyne her hand. “Bitter, but wholesome medicine!” she murmured, and then was too overcome to speak for a little while.

“Ah, my good, wise friend!” said she at last, “thick clouds seem clearing from my mind; I begin to see I was the one to blame.”

“Yes; and if Raby will be as docile as you, and put himself in your place, he will tell me he was the one to blame. There’s no such thing as ‘the one to blame;’ there very seldom is. You judged him as if he was a woman, he judged you as if you were a man.

Enter an obese maniac, and applies the art of arts; the misunderstanding dissolves under it, and you are in each other's arms. But stop"—and his countenance fell again a little: "I am afraid there is a new difficulty. Henry's refusal to take the name of Raby and be his heir. Raby was bitterly mortified, and I fear he blames me and my crotchets; for he has never been near me since. To be sure you are not responsible for Henry's act."

"No, indeed; for between you and me, it mortified me cruelly. And now things have taken a turn—in short, what with his love, and his jealousy, and this hopeless failure to make a fortune by inventing, I feel I can bring him to his senses. I am not pleased with Grace Carden about something; but no matter, I shall call on her and show her she must side with me in earnest. You will let my brother know I was always on his side in *that* matter, whatever other offence I may have given him years ago."

"And I am on your side, too. Your son has achieved a small independence. Bayne can carry on the little factory, and Henry can sell or lease his patents; he can never sink to a mere dependant. There, I throw my crotchets to the wind, and we will Raby your son, and marry him to Grace Carden."

"God bless you, my good and true friend! How

can I ever thank you?" Her cheek flushed, and her great maternal eye sparkled, and half the beauty of her youth came back. Her gratitude gave a turn to the conversation which she neither expected nor desired.

"Mrs. Little," said Doctor Amboyne, "this is the first time you have entered my den, and the place seems transformed by your presence. My youth comes back to me with the feelings I thought time had blunted; but no, I feel that, when you leave my den again, it will be darker than ever, if you do not leave me a hope that you will one day enter it for good."

"For shame!—At our age!" said the widow.

But she spoilt the remonstrance by blushing like a girl of eighteen.

"You are not old in my eyes; and, as for me, let my years plead for me, since all those years I have lived single for your sake."

This last appeal shook Mrs. Little. She said she could not entertain any such thoughts whilst her son was unhappy. "But marry him to his Grace, and then—I don't know what folly I might not be persuaded into."

The Doctor was quite content with that. He said he would go to Raby, as soon as he could make the journey with safety, and her troubles and her son's should end.

Mrs. Little drove home, a happy mother. As for the promise she had made her old friend, it vexed her a little, she was so used to look at him in another light; but she shrugged her maternal shoulders, as much as to say, "When once my Henry leaves me—why not?"

She knew she must play the politician a little with Henry, so she opened the battery cautiously. "My dear," said she, at breakfast, "good news! Doctor Amboyne undertakes to reconcile us both to your uncle."

"All the better. Mr. Raby is a wrong-headed man, but he is a noble-minded one, that is certain."

"Yes, and I have done him injustice. Doctor Amboyne has shown me that."

She said no more. One step at a time.

Henry went up to Woodbine Villa, and Grace received him a little coldly. He asked what was the matter. She said, "They tell me you were at the very door the other day, and did not come in."

"It is true," said he. "Another had just come out. Mr. Coventry."

"And you punished *me* because that poor man had called on me. Have you not faith in me? or what is it? I shall be angry one of these days."

"No, you will not, if I can make you understand

my feelings. Put yourself in my place, dearest. Here am I, fighting the good fight for you, against long odds; and, at last, the brickmakers and bricklayers have beat us. Now you know that is a bitter cup for me to drink. Well, I come up here for my one drop of comfort; and out walks my declared rival, looks into my face, sees my trouble there, and turns off with a glance of insolent triumph. (Grace flushed.) And then consider: I am your choice, yet I am only allowed to visit you once a week."

"That is papa's doing."

"No matter; so it is. Yet my rival can come when he pleases: and no doubt he does come every other day."

"You fancy that."

"It is not all fancy; for—by heaven, there he is at the gate. Two visits to my one; there. Well, all the better, I'll talk to *him*."

He rose from his seat black with wrath.

Grace turned pale, and rang the bell in a moment.

The servant entered the room, just as Mr. Coventry knocked at the door.

"Not at home to anybody," said she.

Mr. Coventry's voice was heard to say incredulously, "Not at home?" Then he retired slowly, and did not leave the neighbourhood. He had called at an hour when Grace was always at home.

Henry sat down, and said, "Thank you, Grace." But he looked very gloomy and disturbed.

She sat down too, and then they looked at each other.

Henry was the first to speak. "We are both pupils of the good Doctor. Put yourself in my place. That man troubles our love, and makes my heavy heart a sore heart."

The tears were in Grace's eyes. "Dearest," said she, "I will not put myself in your place; you would lose by that, for I love you better than myself. Yes, it is unjust that you should be allowed to visit me but once a week, and he should visit me when he chooses. I assure you I have permitted his visits out of pure good-nature; and now I will put an end to them."

She drew her desk towards her, and wrote to Mr. Coventry. It took her some little time. She handed Henry the letter to read. He took it in his hand; but hesitated. He inquired what would be the effect of it?

"That he will never visit me again till you and I are married, or engaged, and that is the same thing. Why don't you read it?"

"I don't know: it goes against me somehow. Seems unmanly. I'll take your word for it."

This charmed Grace. "Ah," said she, "I have chosen right."

Then he kissed her hands, and blessed her: and then she told him it was nothing; he was a goose, and had no idea what she would do for him; "more than you would do for me, I know," said she.

That he denied, and then she said she might perhaps put him to the proof some day.

They were so happy together, time slipped away unheeded. It was full three hours before Henry could tear himself away, though he knew he was wanted at the works; and he went out at the gate, glowing with happiness: and Coventry, who was ready to drop with the fatigue of walking and watching just above, saw him come out triumphant.

Then it was his turn to feel a deadly qualm. However, he waited a little longer, and then made his call.

"Not at home."

Henry, on his way to the works, looked in on his mother, and told her how nobly Grace had behaved.

Mrs. Little was pleased, and it smoothed down her maternal bristles, and made it much easier for her to carry out her design. For the first time since Mr. Carden had offended her by his cold-blooded treatment of her son, she called at Woodbine Villa.

Grace was at home to see her, and met her with a

blushing timidity, and piteous wistful looks, not easy to misunderstand, nor to resist.

They soon came to an understanding, and Mrs. Little told Grace what Doctor Amboyne had promised to do, and represented to her how much better it would be for Henry to fall into his uncle Raby's views, than to engage in hopeless struggles like that in which Mr. Bolt and he had just been so signally defeated. "And then, you know, my dear, you could marry next month, you two; that is to say, if *you* felt disposed: I will answer for Henry."

Grace's red face and swimming eyes told how this shaft went home. In short, she made a coy promise that she would co-operate with Mrs. Little: "and," said she, "how lucky! he has almost promised to grant me the first favour I ask him. Well, I shall entreat him to be a good nephew, and do whatever dear Mr. Raby asks him. But of course I shall not say, and then if you do, you and I"—here the young lady cut her sentence very short.

"Of course not," said Mrs. Little. "*That* will follow as a matter of course. Now, my dear, you and I are conspirators—for his good: and we must write often and let each other know all we do."

With this understanding, and a good many pretty speeches and kisses, they parted.

Doctor Amboyne did not recover so quickly as they could have wished; but they employed the interval; feelers were adroitly applied to Henry by both ladies, and they were pleased to find that he rather admired his wrong-headed uncle, and had been deeply touched by the old gentleman's address to his mother's picture.

Bolt never came near him, and the grass was beginning to grow on the condemned bricks. In short, everything seemed to incline in one direction.

There was, however, something very serious going on out of their sight.

“Not at home!” That white lie made Mr. Coventry feel sick at heart. He went home disconsolate. The same evening he received Miss Carden's letter.

The writer treated him like a gentleman, said a few words about her own peculiar position, and begged him to consider that position, and to be very generous; to cease his visits entirely for the present, and so give himself one more title to her esteem, which was all she had to give him. This was the purport, and the manner was simply perfect, so gentle yet firm: and then she flattered his *amour propre* by asking that from his generosity which she could have taken as a right: she did all she could to soften the blow. But she failed. The letter was posted too soon after Henry's visit. Behind the velvet paw that struck him, Coventry saw

the claws of the jealous lover. He boiled with rage and agony, and cursed them both in his fury.

After an hour or two of phrenzy, he sat down, and wrote back a letter full of bitter reproaches and sneers. He reflected. He lighted a cigar and smoked it, biting it almost through, now and then. He burned his letter. He lay awake all night, raging and reflecting alternately, as passion or judgment got the upper hand.

In the morning he saw clearer. "Don't quarrel with *her*. Destroy *him*." He saw this as plainly as if it was written.

He wrote Grace a few sad lines, to say that of course he submitted to her will. The letter ended thus: "Since I can do nothing to please you, let me suffer to please you: even that is something." (This letter brought the tears to Grace's eyes, and she pitied and esteemed the writer.)

He put on a plain suit, and drove into Hillsborough, burning with wild ideas of vengeance. He had no idea what he should do; but he was resolved to do something. He felt capable of assassinating Little with his own hand.

I should be sorry to gain any sympathy for him; but it is only fair the reader should understand that he felt deeply aggrieved, and that we should all feel aggrieved under similar circumstances. Priority is a title, all the

world over ; and he had been the lady's lover first, had been encouraged, and supplanted.

Longing to wound, but not knowing how to strike, he wandered about the town, and went into several factories, and talked to some of the men, and contrived to bring the conversation round to Little, and learn what he was doing. But he gathered no information of any use to him. Then he went to Grotait's place, and tried to pump him. That sagacious man thought this odd, and immediately coupled this with his previous denunciation of Little, and drew him on.

Coventry was too much under the influence of passion to be quite master of himself that day ; and he betrayed to this other Machiavel that he wished ill to Henry Little. As soon as he had thoroughly ascertained this, Grotait turned coolly on him, and said, " I am sorry Mr. Little has got enemies, for he and his partner talk of building a new factory, and that will be a good thing for us : take a score of saw-grinders off the box." Then Coventry saw he had made a mistake, and left " The Cutler's Arms " abruptly.

Next day he took a lodging in the town, and went about groping for information, and hunting for a man, whose face he knew, but not his name. He learned all about Bolt and Little's vain endeavour to build, and went and saw the place, and the condemned bricks.

The sight gratified him. He visited every saw-grinder's place he could hear of; and, at last, he fell in with Sam Cole, and recognized him at once. That worthy affected not to know him, and went on grinding a big saw. Coventry stepped up to him, and said in his ear, "I want to speak with you. Make an appointment."

Cole looked rather sulky and reluctant at being drawn from his obscurity. However, he named a low public-house, in a back slum, and there these two met that night, and for greater privacy were soon seated in a place bigger than a box and smaller than a room, with discoloured walls, and a rough wooden table before them, splashed with beer. It looked the very den to hatch villany in, and drink poison to its success.

Coventry, pale and red alternately, as fear and shame predominated, began to beat about the bush.

"You and I have reason to hate the same man. You know who I mean."

"I can guess. Begins with a hel."

"He has wronged me deeply; and he hurt you."

"That is true, sir. I think he broke my windpipe, for I'm as hoarse as a raven ever since: and I've got one or two of the shot in my cheek still."

"Well, then, now is your time to be revenged."

"Well, I don't know about that. What he done

was in self-defence ; and if I play bowls I must look for rubs."

Coventry bit his lip with impatience.

After a pause, he said, "What were you paid for that job?"

"Not half enough."

"Twenty pounds?"

"Nor nothing like it."

"I'll give you a hundred to do it again, only more effectually." He turned very pale when he had made this offer.

"Ah," said Cole, "anybody could tell you was a gentleman."

"You accept my offer, then?"

"Nay, I mean it is easy to see you don't know trades. I mustn't meddle with Mr. Little now ; he is right with the trade."

"What, not if I pay you five times as much ? say ten times, then ; two hundred pounds."

"Nay, we Union chaps are not malefactors. You can't buy us to injure an unoffending man. We have got our laws, and they are just ones, and, if a man will break them, after due warning, the order is given to 'do' him, and the men are named for the job ; and get paid a trifle for their risk ; and the risk is not much, the trade stand by one another too true, and in so

many ways. But if a man is right with the trade, it is treason to harm him. No, I mustn't move a finger against Little."

"You have set up a conscience!" said Coventry bitterly.

"You dropped yours, and I picked it up," was the Yorkshireman's ready reply. He was nettled now.

At this moment the door was opened and shut very swiftly, and a whisper came in through the momentary aperture, "Mind your eye, Sam Cole."

Coventry rushed to the door, and looked out: there was nobody to be seen.

"You needn't trouble yourself," said Cole. "You might as well run after the wind. That was a friendly warning. I know the voice, and Grotait must be on to us. Now, sir, if you offered me a thousand pounds, I wouldn't touch a hair of Mr. Little: he is right with the trade, and we should have Grotait and all the trade as bitter as death against us. I'll tell you a secret, sir, that I've kept from my wife"—(he lowered his voice to a whisper)—"Grotait could hang me any day he chose. You must chink your brass in some other ear, as the saying is: only mind, you done me a good turn once, and I'll do you one now; you have been talking to somebody else besides me, and blown yourself: so now

drop your little game, and let Little alone, or the trade will make it their job to *lag you*."

Coventry's face betrayed so much alarm, that the man added, "And penal servitude wouldn't suit the likes of you. Keep out of it."

With this rough advice the conference ended, and Mr. Coventry went home thoroughly shaken in his purpose, and indeed not a little anxious on his own account. Suppose he had been overheard! his offer to Cole was an offence within reach of the criminal law. What a mysterious labyrinth was this Trade confederacy, into which he had put his foot so rashly, and shown his game, like a novice, to the subtle and crafty Grotait. He now collected all his powers, not to injure Little, but to slip out of his own blunder.

He seized this opportunity to carry out a coup he had long meditated: he went round to a dozen timber-merchants, and contracted with them for the sale of every tree, old or young, on his estate; and, while the trees were falling like grain, and the agents on both sides measuring the fallen, he vanished entirely from Hillsborough and Bollinghope.

Doctor Amboyne's influenza was obstinate, and it was nearly a fortnight before he was strong enough to go to Cairnhope; but, at last, Mrs. Little received a

line from him, to say he was just starting, and would come straight to her on his return ; perhaps she would give him a cup of tea.

This letter came very opportunely. Bolt had never shown his face again ; and Henry had given up all hopes of working his patents, and had said more than once he should have to cross the water and sell them.

As for Mrs. Little, she had for some time maintained a politic silence. But now she prepared for the Doctor's visit as follows : " So, then, you have no more hopes from the invincible Mr. Bolt ? "

" None whatever. He must have left the town in disgust. "

" He is a wise man. I want you to imitate his example. Henry, my dear, what is the great object of your life at present ? Is it not to marry Grace Carden ? "

" You know it is. "

" Then take her from my hands. Why do you look so astonished ? Have you forgotten my little boast ? " Then, in a very different tone, " You will love your poor mother still, when you are married ? You will say, ' I owe her my wife, ' will you not ? "

Henry was so puzzled he could not reply even to this touching appeal, made with eyes full of tears at the thought of parting with him.

Mrs. Little proceeded to explain : “ Let me begin at the beginning. Dr. Amboyne has shown me I was more to blame than your uncle was. Would you believe it, although he refused your poor father the trust-money, he went that moment to get 2,000*l.* of his own, and lend it to us? Oh, Henry, when Dr. Amboyne told me that, and opened my eyes, I could have thrown myself at poor Guy’s feet. I have been the most to blame in our unhappy quarrel ; and I have sent Dr. Amboyne to say so. Now, Henry, my brother will forgive me, the Doctor says ; and, oh, my heart yearns to be reconciled. You will not stand in my way, dearest ? ”

“ Not likely. Why, I am under obligations to him, for my part.”

“ Yes, but Doctor Amboyne says dear Guy is deeply mortified by your refusal to be his heir. For my sake, for your own sake, and for Grace Carden’s sake, change your mind now.”

“ What, go into his house, and wait for dead men’s shoes ! Find myself some day wishing in my heart that noble old fellow would die ! Such a life turns a man’s stomach even to think of it.”

“ No, no. Doctor Amboyne says that Mr. Bayne can conduct your business here, and hand you a little income, without your meddling.”

“ That is true.”

“And, as for your patents, gentlemen can sell them to traders, or lease them out. My brother would make a settlement on Grace and you—she is his god-daughter—now that is all Mr. Carden demands. Then you could marry, and, on your small present income, make a little tour together: and dispose of your patents in other places.”

“I could do great things with them in the United States.”

“That is a long way.”

“Why, it is only twelve days.”

“Well, marry first,” said the politic mother.

Henry flushed all over. “Ah!” said he, “you tempt me. Heaven seems to open its gates as you speak. But you cannot be in earnest; he made it an express condition I should drop my father’s name, and take his. Disown my poor dead father! No, no, no!”

Now in reality this condition was wormwood to Mrs. Little; but she knew that if she let her son see her feeling, all was over. She was all the mother now, and fighting for her son’s happiness: so she sacrificed truth to love with an effort, but without a scruple. “It is not as if it was a strange name. Henry, you compel me to say things that tear my heart to say, but—which has been your best friend, your mother, or your poor dear father?”

Henry was grieved at the question: but he was a man who turned his back on nothing. "My father loved me," said he: "I can remember that; but he deserted me, and you, in trouble; but you—you have been friend, parent, lover, and guardian angel to me. And, oh, how little I have done to deserve it all."

"Well, dear, the mother you value so highly, her name was Raby. Yes, love; and, forgive me, I honour and love my mother's name even more than I do the name of Little—(the tears ran out of her eyes at this falsehood)—pray take it, to oblige me, and reconcile me to my dear brother, and end our troubles for ever." Then she wept on his neck, and he cried with her.

After a while, he said, "I feel my manhood all melting away together. I am quite confused. It is hard to give up a noble game. It is hard to refuse such a mother as you. Don't cry any more, for mercy's sake: I'm like to choke. Mind, crying is work I'm not used to. What does *she* say? I am afraid I shall win her, but lose her respect."

"She says she admires your pride; but you have shown enough. If you refuse any longer, she will begin to fear you don't love her as well as she loves you."

This master-stroke virtually ended the battle. Henry said nothing; but the signs of giving way were manifest

in him, so manifest that Mrs. Little became quite impatient for the Doctor's arrival to crown all.

He drove up to the door at last, and Henry ran out and brought him in. He looked pale, and sat down exhausted.

Mrs. Little restrained her impatience, and said, "We are selfish creatures to send you on our business before you are half well."

"I'm well enough in health," said he, "but I am quite upset."

"What is the matter? Surely, you have not failed? Guy does not refuse his forgiveness?"

"No, it is not that. Perhaps, if I had been in time — but the fact is, Guy Raby has left England."

"What, for good? Impossible!"

"Who can tell? All I know is that he has sold his horses, discharged his servants all but one, and gone abroad without a word. I was the friend of his youth,—his college chum; he must be bitterly wounded to go away like that, and not even let me know."

Mrs. Little lifted up her hands. "What have we done? what have we done? Wounded! no wonder. Oh, my poor, wronged, insulted brother!"

She wept bitterly, and took it to heart so, it preyed on her health and spirits. She was never the same woman from that hour.

While her son and her friend were saying all they could to console her, there appeared at the gate the last man any of them ever expected to see—Mr. Bolt.

Henry saw him first and said so.

“Keep him out,” cried the Doctor, directly. “Don’t let that bragging fool in to disturb our sorrow.” He opened the door and told the servant-girl to say “Not at home.”

“Not at home,” said the girl.

“That’s a lie!” shouted Bolt, and shoved her aside, and burst into the room. “None of your tricks on travellers,” said he, in his obstreperous way. “I saw your heads through the window. Good news, my boy! I’ve done the trick. I wouldn’t say a word till it was all settled, for Brag’s a good dog, but Holdfast’s a better. I’ve sold my building-site to some gents that want to speculate in a church, and I’ve made five hundred pounds profit by the sale. I’m always right, soon or late. And I’ve bought a factory ready made—the Star Works; bought ’em, sir, with all the gear and plant, and working hands.”

“The Star Works? The largest but one in Hillsborough!”

“Ay, lad. Money and pluck together, they’ll beat the world. We have got a noble place, with every con-

venience. All we have got to do now is to go in and win."

Young Little's eyes sparkled. "All right," said he, "I like this way the best."

Mrs. Little sighed.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN that part of London called "the City" are shady little streets, that look like pleasant retreats from the busy, noisy world: yet are strongholds of business.

One of these contained, and perhaps still contains, a public office full of secrets, some droll, some sad, some terrible. The building had a narrow, insignificant front, but was of great depth, and its south side lighted by large bay windows all stone and plate-glass; and these were open to the sun and air, thanks to a singular neighbour; here, in the heart of the City, was wedged a little rustic church, with its churchyard, whose bright green grass first startled, then soothed and refreshed the eye, in that wilderness of stone; an emerald set in granite: the grass flowed up to the south wall of the "office;" those massive stone windows hung over the graves; the plumed clerks could not look out of window and doubt that all men are mortal: and the article the office sold was Immortality.

It was the Gosshawk Life Insurance.

On a certain afternoon anterior to the Hillsborough scenes last presented, the plumed clerks were all at the south windows, looking at a funeral in the little church-yard, and passing some curious remarks; for know that the deceased was insured in the Gosshawk for nine hundred pounds, and had paid but one premium.

The facts, as far as known, were these. Mr. Richard Martin, a Londoner by birth, but residing in Wales, went up to London to visit his brother. Towards the end of the visit the two Martins went up the river in a boat, with three more friends, and dined at Richmond. They rowed back in the cool of the evening: at starting they were merely jovial; but they stopped at nearly all the public-houses by the water-side, and, by visible gradations, became jolly — uproarious — sang songs — caught crabs. At Vauxhall they got a friendly warning, and laughed at it: under Southwark bridge they ran against an abutment, and were upset in a moment: it was now dusk, and, according to their own account, they all lost sight of each other in the water. One swam ashore in Middlesex, another in Surrey, a third got to the chains of a barge and was taken up much exhausted, and Robert Martin laid hold of the buttress itself, and cried loudly for assistance. They asked anxiously after each other, but their anxiety appeared to subside in an hour or two, when they found

there was nobody missing but Richard Martin. Robert told the police it was all right, Dick could swim like a cork. However, next morning he came with a sorrowful face to say his brother had not reappeared, and begged them to drag the river. This was done, and a body found, which the survivors and Mrs. Richard Martin disowned.

The insurance office was informed, and looked into the matter; and Mrs. Martin told their agent, with a flood of tears, she believed her husband had taken that opportunity to desert her, and was not drowned at all. Of course this went to the office directly.

But a fortnight afterwards a body was found in the water, down at Woolwich, entangled in some rushes by the water-side.

Notice was given to all the survivors.

The friends of Robert Martin came, and said the clothes resembled those worn by Richard Martin; but beyond that they could not be positive.

But, when the wife came, she recognized the body at once.

The brother agreed with her; but, on account of the bloated and discoloured condition of the face, asked to have the teeth examined: his poor brother, he said, had a front tooth broken short in two. This broken tooth was soon found; also a pencil-case, and a key,

in the pocket of the deceased; these completed the identification.

Up to this moment the conduct of Richard Martin's relatives and friends had been singularly apathetic; but now all was changed: they broke into loud lamentations, and he became the best of husbands, best of men: his lightest words were sacred. Robert Martin now remembered that "poor Dick" had stood and looked into that little churchyard and said, "If you outlive me, Bob, bury me in this spot; father lies here." So Robert Martin went to the churchwarden for leave to do this last sad office. The churchwarden refused, very properly, but the brother's entreaties, the widow's tears, the tragedy itself, and other influences, extorted at last a reluctant consent, coupled with certain sanitary conditions.

The funeral was conducted unobtrusively, and the grave dug out of sight of the Gosshawk. But of course it could not long escape observation; that is to say, it was seen by the clerks; but the directors and manager were all seated round a great table upstairs absorbed in a vital question, viz. whether or not the Gosshawk should imitate some other companies, and insure against fire as well as death. It was the third and last discussion; the minority against this new operation was small, but obstinate and warm, and the majority so absorbed

in bringing them to reason, that nobody went to the window until the vote had passed and the Gosshawk was a Life and Fire Insurance. Then some of the gentlemen rose and stretched their legs, and detected the lugubrious enormity. "Hallo!" cried Mr. Carden, and rang a bell. Edwards, an old clerk, appeared, and, in reply to Mr. Carden, told him it was one of their losses being buried—Richard Martin.

Mr. Carden said this was an insult to the office, and sent Edwards out to remonstrate.

Edwards soon reappeared with Robert Martin, who represented, with the utmost humility, that it was the wish of the deceased, and they had buried him, as ordered, in three feet of charcoal.

"What, is the ceremony performed?"

"Yes, sir, all but filling in the grave. Come and see the charcoal."

"Hang the charcoal!"

"Well," said a humane but somewhat pompous director, "if the ceremony has gone so far—but, Mr. Martin, this must never recur, charcoal or no charcoal."

Mr. Martin promised it never should: and was soon after observed in the churchyard urging expedition.

The sad company speedily dispersed, and left nothing to offend nor disgust the Life and Fire Insurance,

except a new grave, and a debt of nine hundred pounds to the heirs or assigns of Richard Martin.

Not very far from this churchyard was a public-house; and, in that public-house, a small parlour upstairs, and in that parlour a man, who watched the funeral rites with great interest, but not in a becoming spirit; for his eyes twinkled with the intensest merriment all the time, and at each fresh stage of the mournful business he burst into peals of laughter. Never was any man so thoroughly amused in the City before, at all events in business hours.

Richard Martin's executor waited a decent time, and then presented his claim to the Gosshawk. His brother proved a lien on it for 300*l.*, and the rest went by will to his wife. The Gosshawk paid the money, after the delay accorded by law.

CHAPTER XX.

MESSRS. BOLT AND LITTLE put their heads together, and played a prudent game. They kept the works going for a month, without doing anything novel, except what tended to the health and comfort of their workmen.

But, meantime, they cleared out two adjacent rooms : one was called the studio, the other the experiment room.

In due course they hired a couple of single men from Birmingham to work the machine under lock and key.

Little, with his own hands, effected an aperture in the party-wall, and thus conveyed long saws from his studio to the machine, and received them back ground.

The men were lodged three miles off, were always kept at work half an hour later than the others, and received six pounds per week apiece, on pain of instant dismissal should they breathe a syllable. They did the

work of twenty-four men ; so, even at that high rate of wages, the profit was surprising. It actually went beyond the inventor's calculation, and he saw himself, at last, on the road to rapid fortune, and, above all, to Grace Carden.

This success excited Bolt's cupidity, and he refused to contract the operation any longer.

Then the partners had a quarrel, and nearly dissolved. However, it ended in Little dismissing his Birmingham hands, and locking up his "Experiment Room," and in Bolt openly devoting another room to the machines: two long, two circular.

These machines coined money, and Bolt chuckled and laughed at his partner's apprehensions, for the space of twenty-one days.

On the twenty-second day, the Saw-grinders' Union, which had been stupefied at first, but had now realized the situation, sent Messrs. Bolt and Little a letter, civil and even humble: it spoke of the new invention as one that, if adopted, would destroy their handicraft, and starve the craftsmen and their families; and expressed an earnest hope that a firm, which had shown so much regard for the health and comfort of the workmen, would not persist in a fatal course, on which they had entered innocently and for want of practical advice.

The partners read this note differently. Bolt saw

timidity in it. Little saw a conviction, and a quiet resolution, that foreboded a stern contest.

No reply was sent, and the machines went on coining.

Then came a warning to Little, not violent, but short, and rather grim. Little took it to Bolt and he treated it with contempt.

Two days afterwards the wheel-bands vanished, and the obnoxious machines stood still.

Little was for going to Grotait, to try and come to terms. Bolt declined. He bought new bands, and next day the machines went on again.

This pertinacity soon elicited a curious epistle :

“ MESSRS. BOLT AND LITTLE,—When the blood is in an impure state, brimstone and treacle is applied as a mild purgative ; our taking the bands was the mild remedy ; but, should the seat of disease not be reached, we shall take away the treacle, and add to the brimstone a necessary quantity of saltpetre and charcoal.

“ TANTIA TOPEE.”

On receipt of this, Little, who had tasted the last-mentioned drugs, showed such undisguised anxiety, that Bolt sent for Ransome. He came directly, and was closeted with the firm. Bolt handed him the letters,

told him the case, and begged leave to put him a question. "Is the police worth anything, or nothing, in this here town?"

"It is worth something, I hope, gentlemen."

"How much, I wonder? Of all the bands that have been stolen, and all the people that have been blown up, and scorched, and vitrioled, and shot at, and shot, by Union men, did ever you and your bobbies nail a single malefactor?"

Now Mr. Ransome was a very tall man, with a handsome dignified head, a long black beard, and pleasant, dignified manners. When short, round, vulgar Mr. Bolt addressed him thus, it really was like a terrier snapping at a Newfoundland dog. Little felt ashamed, and said Mr. Ransome had been only a few months in office in the place. "Thank you, Mr. Little," said the chief constable. "Mr. Bolt, I'll ask you a favour. Meet me at a certain place this evening, and let me reply to your question then and there."

This singular proposal excited some curiosity, and the partners accepted a rendezvous. Ransome came to the minute, and took the partners into the most squalid part of this foul city. At the corner of a narrow street he stopped and gave a low whistle. A policeman in plain clothes came to him directly.

“ They are both in the ‘ Spotted Dog,’ sir, with half a dozen more.”

“ Follow me, and guard the door. Will you come, too, gentlemen ? ”

The “ Spotted Dog ” was a low public, with one large room and a sanded floor. Mr. Ransome walked in and left the door open, so that his three companions heard and saw all that passed.

“ Holland and Cheetham, you are wanted.”

“ What for ? ”

“ Wilde’s affair. He has come to himself, and given us your names.”

On this the two men started up and were making for the door. Ransome whipped before it. “ That won’t do.”

Then there was a loud clatter of rising feet, oaths, threats, and even a knife or two drawn; and, in the midst of it all, the ominous click of a pistol, and then dead silence; for it was Ransome who had produced that weapon. “ Come, no nonsense,” said he. “ Door’s guarded, street’s guarded, and I’m not to be trifled with.”

He then handed his pistol to the officer outside with an order, and, stepping back suddenly, collared Messrs. Holland and Cheetham with one movement, and, with a powerful rush, carried them out of the

house in his clutches. Meantime the policeman had whistled, there was a conflux of bobbies, and the culprits were handcuffed and marched off to the Town Hall.

“Five years’ penal servitude for that little lot,” said Ransome. “And now, Mr. Bolt, I have answered your question to the best of my ability.”

“You have answered it like a man. Will you do as much for us?”

“I’ll do my best. Let me examine the place, now that none of them are about.”

Bolt and Ransome went together, but Little went home; he had an anxiety even more pressing, his mother’s declining health. She had taken to pining and fretting, ever since Dr. Amboyne brought the bad news from Cairnhope; and now, instead of soothing and consoling her son, she needed those kind offices from him; and, I am happy to say, she received them. He never spent an evening away from her. Unfortunately he did not succeed in keeping up her spirits, and the sight of her lowered his own.

At this period Grace Carden was unmixed comfort to him; she encouraged him to encroach a little, and visit her twice a week instead of once, and she coaxed him to confide all his troubles to her. He did so; he concealed from his mother that he was at war with the trade again, but he told Grace everything, and her tender

sympathy was the balm of his life. She used to put on cheerfulness for his sake, even when she felt it least.

One day, however, he found her less bright than usual, and she showed him an advertisement—Bollinghope house and park for sale; and she was not old enough nor wise enough to disguise from him that this pained her. Some expressions of regret and pity fell from her; that annoyed Henry, and he said, “What is that to us?”

“Nothing to you; but I feel I am the cause. I have not used him well, that’s certain.”

Henry said, rather cavalierly, that Mr. Coventry was probably selling his house for money, not for love, and (getting angry) that he hoped never to hear the man’s name mentioned again.

Grace Carden was a little mortified by his tone, but she governed herself and said sadly, “My idea of love was to be able to tell you every thought of my heart, even where my conscience reproaches me a little. But if you prefer to exclude one topic—and have no fear that it may lead to the exclusion of others——”

They were on the borders of a tiff; but Henry recovered himself and said firmly, “I hope we shall not have a thought unshared one day: but, just for the present, it will be kinder to spare me that one topic.”

“Very well, dearest,” said Grace. “And, if it had

not been for the advertisement——” she said no more, and the thing passed like a dark cloud between the lovers.

Bollinghope house and park were actually sold that very week ; they were purchased, at more than their value, by a wealthy manufacturer : and the proceeds of this sale and the timber sale cleared off all Coventry’s mortgages, and left him with a few hundred pounds in cash, and an estate which had not a tree on it, but also had not a debt upon it.

Of course he forfeited, by this stroke, his position as a country gentleman ; but that he did not care about, since it was all done with one view, to live comfortably in Paris, far from the intolerable sight of his rival’s happiness with the lady he loved.

He bought in at the sale a few heirlooms and articles of furniture—who does not cling, at the last moment, to something of this kind ?—and rented a couple of unfurnished rooms in Hillsborough to keep them in. He fixed the day of his departure, arranged his goods, and packed his clothes. Then he got a letter of credit on Paris, and went about the town buying numerous articles of cutlery.

But this last simple act led to strange consequences. He was seen and followed ; and in the dead of the evening, as he was cording with his own hands a box con-

taining a few valuables, a heavy step mounted the stair, and there was a rude knock at the door.

Mr. Coventry felt rather uncomfortable, but he said, "Come in."

The door was opened, and there stood Sam Cole.

Coventry received him ill. He looked up from his packing and said, "What on earth do you want, sir?"

But it was not Cole's business to be offended. "Well, sir," said he, "I've been looking out for you some time, and I saw you at our place; so I thought I'd come and tell you a bit o' news."

"What is that?"

"It is about him you know of, begins with a hel."

"Curse him! I don't want to hear about him. I'm leaving the country. Well, what is it?"

"He is wrong with the trade again."

"What is that to me?—Ah!—Sit down, Cole, and tell me."

Cole let him know the case, and assured him that, sooner or later, if threats did not prevail, the Union would go any length.

"Should you be employed?"

"If it was a dangerous job, they'd prefer me."

Mr. Coventry looked at his trunks, and then at Sam Cole. A small voice whispered "Fly." He stifled that warning voice, and told Cole he would stay and watch

this affair, and Cole was to report to him whenever anything fresh occurred. From that hour this gentleman led the life of a malefactor, dressed like a workman, and never went out except at night.

Messrs. Bolt and Little were rattened again, and never knew it till morning. This time it was not the bands, but certain axle-nuts and screws that vanished. The obnoxious machines came to a standstill, and Bolt fumed and cursed. However, at ten o'clock, he and the foreman were invited to the Town Hall, and there they found the missing gear, and the culprit, one of the very workmen employed at high wages on the obnoxious machines.

Ransome had bored a small hole in the ceiling, by means of which this room was watched from above; the man was observed, followed, and nabbed. The property found on him was identified, and the magistrate offered the prisoner a jury, which he declined: then the magistrate dealt with the case summarily, refused to recognize rattening, called the offence "petty larceny," and gave the man six months' prison.

Now as Ransome, for obvious reasons, concealed the means by which this man had been detected, a conviction so mysterious shook that sense of security which ratteners had enjoyed for many years; and the trades began to find that craft had entered the lists with craft.

Unfortunately, those who directed the Saw-grinders Union thought the existence of the trade at stake, and this minor defeat merely exasperated them.

Little received a letter telling him he was acting worse than Brinsley, who had been shot dead in the Briggate ; and asking him, as a practical man, which he thought was likely to die first, he or the Union ? “ You won’t let us live, why should we let you ? ”

Bolt was threatened in similar style, but he merely handed the missives to Ransome ; he never flinched.

Not so Little. He got nervous ; and, in a weak moment, let his mother worm out of him that he was at war with the trades again.

This added anxiety to her grief, and she became worse every day.

Then Doctor Amboyne interfered, and, after a certain degree of fencing—which seems inseparable from the practice of medicine—told Henry plainly he feared the very worst if this went on ; Mrs. Little was on the brink of jaundice. By his advice Henry took her to Aberystwith in Wales ; and, when he had settled her there, went back to his troubles.

To those was now added a desolate home ; gone was the noble face, the maternal eye, the soothing voice, the unfathomable love. He never knew all her value till now.

One night, as he sat by himself sad and disconsolate, his servant came to tell him there was a young woman inquiring for Mrs. Little. Henry went out to her, and it was Jael Dence. He invited her in, and told her what had happened. Jael saw his distress, and gave him her womanly sympathy. "And I came to tell her my own trouble," said she, "fie on me."

"Then tell it me, Jael. There, take off your shawl and sit down. They shall make you a cup of tea."

Jael complied, with a slight blush; but as to her trouble, she said it was not worth speaking of in that house.

Henry insisted, however, and she said, "Mine all comes of my sister marrying that Phil Davis. To tell you the truth I went to church with a heavy heart on account of their both beginning with a D—Dence and Davis; for 'tis an old saying—

If you change the name and not the letter,
You change for the worse and not for the better.

Well, sir, it all went wrong somehow. Parson he was South country: and, when his time came to kiss the bride, he stood and looked ever so helpless; and I had to tell him he must kiss her; and even then he stared foolish like a bit before he kissed her, and the poor lass's face getting up and the tear in her eye at being

slighted. And that put Patty out for one thing: and then she wouldn't give away the ribbon to the fastest runner—The lads run a hundred yards to the bride, for ribbon and kiss, you know—Wasn't the ribbon she grudged, poor wench; but the fastest runner in Cairnhope town is that Will Gibbon, a nasty, ugly, slobbering chap, that was always after her, and Philip jealous of him: so she did for the best, and Will Gibbon safe to win it. But the village lads they didn't see the reason, and took it all to themselves. Was she better than her granddam? and were they worse than their grandsires? They ran on before, and fired the anvil when she passed: just fancy! an affront close to her own door: and, sir, she walked in a doors crying. There was a wedding for you! George the blacksmith was that hurt at their making free with his smithy to affront her, he lifted his arm for the first time, and pretty near killed a couple of them, poor thoughtless bodies. Well, sir, Phil Davis always took a drop, you know, and, instead of mending, he got worse; they live with father, and of course he has only to go to the barrel: old-fashioned farmers like us don't think to spy on the ale. He was so often in liquor, I checked him; but Patty indulged him in everything. By-and-by my lord gets ever so civil to me: 'What next?' said I to myself. One fine evening we are set upstairs at our tea; in he comes drunk, and

says many things we had to look at one another and excuse. Presently he tells us all that he has made a mistake; he has wedded Patty, and I'm the one he likes the best. I thought the fool was in jest; but Patty she gave a cry as if a knife had gone through her heart. Then my blood got up in a moment. 'That's an affront to all three,' said I: 'and take your answer, ye drunken sow,' said I. I took him by the scruff of the neck and just turned him out of the room and sent him to the bottom of the stairs headforemost. Then Patty she quarrelled with me: and father he sided with her. And so I gave them my blessing, and told them to send for me in trouble; and I left the house I was born in. It all comes of her changing her name and not her letter." Here a few tears interrupted further comment.

Henry consoled her, and asked her what she was going to do.

She said she did not know; but she had a good bit of money put by, and was not afraid of work, and, in truth, she had come there to ask Mrs. Little's advice, "poor lady. Now don't you mind me, Mr. Henry; your trouble is a deal worse than mine."

"Jael," said he, "you must come here and keep my house till my poor mother is better."

Jael coloured and said, "Nay, that will not do. But

if you could find me something to do in your great factory—and I hear you have enemies there; you might as well have a friend right in the middle of them. Eh, but I'd keep my eyes and ears open for you."

Henry appreciated this proposal, and said there were plenty of things she could do; she could hone, she could pack, she could superintend, and keep the girls from gabbling; "that," said he, "is the real thing that keeps them behind the men at work."

So Jael Dence lodged with a female cousin in Hillsborough, and filled a position of trust in the factory of Bolt and Little: she packed, and superintended; and the foreman paid her thirty shillings a week. The first time this was tendered her she said severely, "Is this right, young man?" meaning, "Is it not too much?"

"Oh, you will be raised if you stay with us three months."

"Raised?" said the virtuous rustic! Then, looking loftily round on the other women, "What ever do these factory folk find to grumble at?"

Henry told Grace all about this, and she said, rather eagerly,—“ Ah, I am glad of that. You'll have a good watch-dog.”

It was a shrewd speech. The young woman soon found out that Little was really in danger, and she was all eyes, and ears, and no tongue.

Yet neither her watchfulness, nor Ransome's, prevailed entirely against the deviltries of the offended Union. Machinery was always breaking down by pure accident; so everybody swore, and nobody believed: the water was all let out of a boiler, and the boiler burst. Bands were no longer taken, but they were cut. And, in short, the works seemed to be under a curse.

And, lest the true origin of all these mishaps should be doubted, each annoyance was followed by an anonymous letter. These were generally sent to Little. A single sentence will indicate the general tone of each.

1. "All these are but friendly warnings, to save your life if possible."

2. "I never give in. I fight to death, and with more craft and duplicity than Bolt and Ransome. They will never save you from me, if you persist. Ask others whether I ever failed to keep my word."

3. "If I but move my finger, you are sent into eternity."

Henry Little's nerve began to give way more and more.

Meantime Cole met Mr. Coventry, and told him what was going on beneath the surface: at the same time he expressed his surprise at the extraordinary forbearance shown by the Union. "Grotait is turning soft, I think. He will not give the word to burn Sebastopol."

END OF VOL. II.

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